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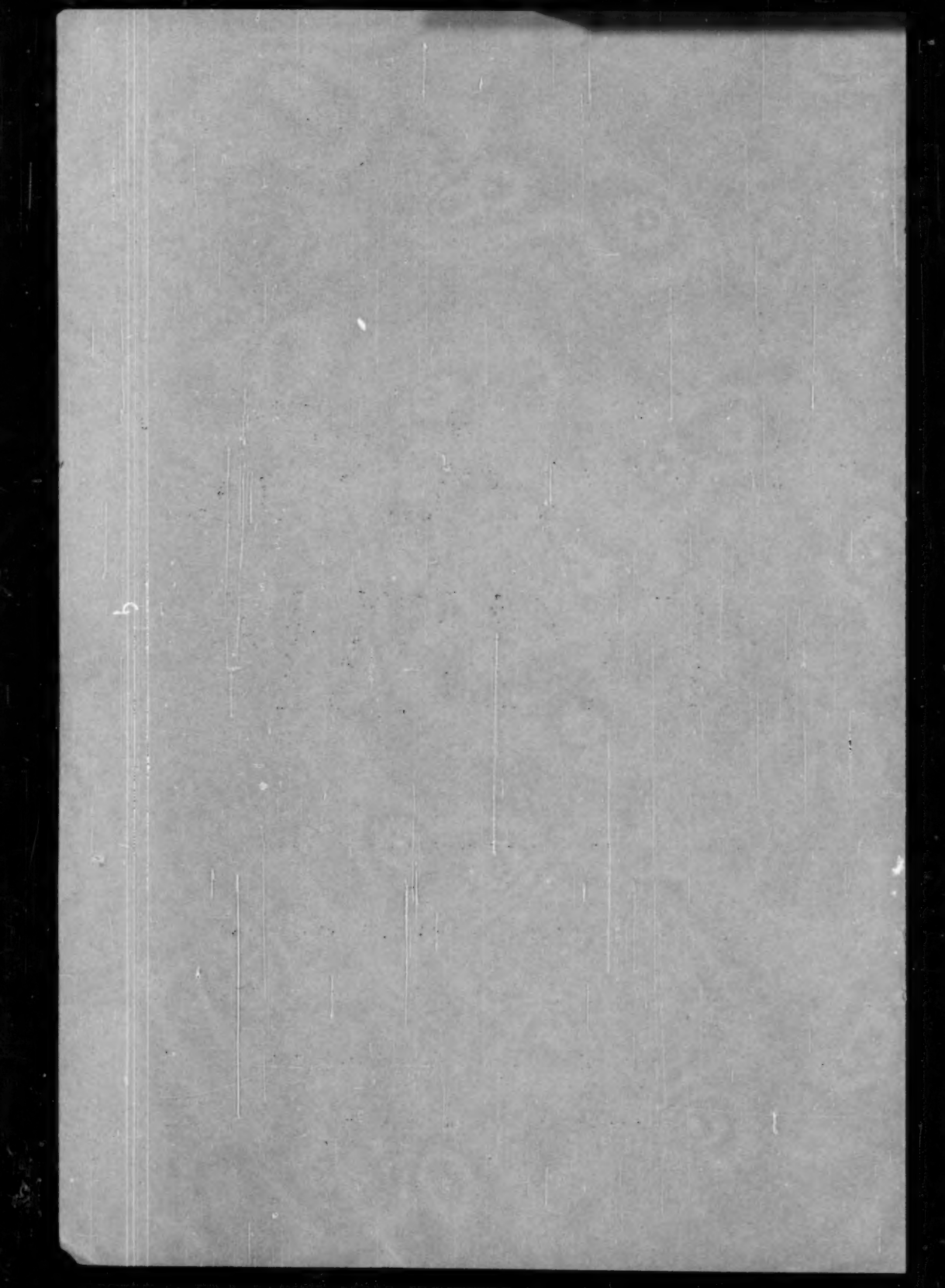
# THE ROMANIC REVIEW

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# THE ROMANIC REVIEW

## A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION

VOLUME LI

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## NEW LIGHT ON MONTAIGNE'S TRIP TO PARIS IN 1588

By Donald M. Frame

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

TWENTY-FOUR years ago, new evidence about Montaigne's trip to Paris in February, 1588, which until then had neither aroused nor seemed to deserve much interest, showed it as an intriguing puzzle whose missing parts still outnumber those that we have. The purpose of this article is to add one piece to that puzzle.

It was M. Raymond Ritter, in his excellent biography *Cette Grande Corisande* (1936), who revealed the reports of Montaigne's arrival in Paris by the Spanish ambassador Don Bernardino de Mendoza to his king Philip II, and showed admirably how they illuminated Montaigne's relationships with Henry III, Henry of Navarre, and Diane ("Corisande") d'Andoins de Gramont, his role as adviser and negotiator, the reasons for his trip to Paris at that time, and the "secret" of Navarre's failure fully to exploit his victory at Coutras a few months earlier. Many scholars have since discussed M. Ritter's valuable discovery but have added little to his first interpretation of it;<sup>1</sup> this big gain has not led directly to others.

Yet nine years earlier, in 1927, there was published a much fuller report of Montaigne's trip by the probable main source of Mendoza's information, Sir Edward Stafford, English ambassador to France. Though Stafford's editors recognized the traveler as the essayist and commented on this interesting fact, it has never to my knowledge been noted by students of Montaigne.

The stress in Stafford's report on the secrecy of Montaigne's instructions (though hardly of his mission) warrants a review of Montaigne's

1. M. Ritter recently filled out his story by including in the evidence Mornay's letter of January 24, 1588, quoted below, p. 170; see *Une Dame de chevalerie: Corisande d'Andoins, comtesse de Guiche* (c. 1959), a revised and enlarged 2nd ed. of *Cette Grande Corisande* (c. 1936), pp. 203-04; also *Bulletin de la Société des Amis de Montaigne* (hereafter *BSAM*), 3e sér. no. 9 (Jan.-March 1959), pp. 12-13. (Unless otherwise noted, all books listed in this article were published in Paris.)

In "Montaigne et le secret de Coutras" (*La Revue*, Oct. 1, 1950, pp. 461-72), Lévis-Mirepoix had already joined the Mornay item to the others. Among the books that have used M. Ritter's findings are these: Strowski, *Montaigne, sa vie publique et privée* (c. 1938); Bailly, *Montaigne* (c. 1942); Barrière, *Montaigne, gentilhomme gascon* (2nd ed., Bordeaux, c. 1948); Nicolai, *Les Belles Amies de Montaigne* (c. 1950); Frame, *Montaigne's Discovery of Man* (New York, 1955); Mattingly, *The Armada* (New York, 1959).

relations with the persons concerned, since no single account of them forms an adequate setting for the new material.<sup>2</sup>

#### I. MONTAIGNE AND HENRY III

Stafford's first mention of Montaigne says he is coming to be presented to the king. This was hardly necessary. Already before the death of Henry II in 1559 Montaigne had been to court at least once; his visits had multiplied under Charles IX (1560-74), who had made him in 1571 a member of the Order of Saint Michael and, no later than 1573, a gentleman in ordinary of his chamber. His first significant encounter with the last Valois, however, may have been the one reported by La Croix du Maine.<sup>3</sup> It seems that Montaigne brought a copy of his *Essais* to the king and replied to his compliments on it that his Majesty should like the author too, since the book was an account of his life and actions. Possibly too pat in detail,<sup>4</sup> the story seems dependable in general. The meeting presumably took place late in June, 1580; Montaigne was on his way to join the royal army under Matignon besieging Protestant-held La Fère in Picardy.

Henry III showed great confidence in Montaigne that fall, if we may assume, as seems likely, that then, in the conferences at the château of Le Fleix, with Montaigne's eminent friend and neighbor the Marquis de Trans as host, the representatives of the parties concerned agreed that in the following year Montaigne—a loyal moderate, the one man suitable and acceptable alike to Henry III, Catherine de' Medici, Margaret of Valois, and Henry of Navarre—should replace the troublesome Biron as mayor of Bordeaux.<sup>5</sup> When Montaigne came home on November 30, 1581 after seventeen months of travel, he had been thinking of declining this honor, of which he had learned in Italy on September 7. Any such notions were dispelled by a letter from his king dated November 25, laudatory but firm, commanding him to return and take up his duties at once:

Monsieur de Montaigne, pour ce que j'ay en estime grande vostre fidelité et zellée dévotion à mon service ce m'a esté plaisir d'entendre que vous ayez esté esleu maior de ma ville de Bourdeaux . . . [Je] vous ordonne et enjoincts bien expressement que sans delay ne excuse reveniez au plus tost que la présente vous sera rendue, faire le deu et service de la charge où vous avez esté si

2. The best such setting is in Strowski's book. Rich but not always reliable is Alphonse Grün, *La Vie publique de Michel Montaigne* (1855).

3. *Bibliothèque française* (1584; in 1772-73 ed., 2 v.), II, 130-31.

4. Possibly not, since the *Essais* of 1578-80 reveal Montaigne's great self-consciousness about his plan of self-portrayal.

5. See Alexandre Nicolai, *Les Belles Amies de Montaigne*, pp. 135-45. It was Trans who awarded the Order of Saint Michael to Montaigne on behalf of Charles IX.

légitimement appelé. Et vous ferez chose qui me sera très agréable, et le contraire me desplairoit grandement . . .<sup>6</sup>

The many letters written by, to, and about Montaigne during his two terms as mayor of Bordeaux, which clearly show his peaceable but vigilant loyalty to his king, are too well known to warrant a detailed review here. Enough to recall that in the difficult task of keeping Bordeaux peaceful and loyal against threats from Leaguers like Vaillac within and Protestants near by, Montaigne worked judiciously and devotedly with the king's acting lieutenant-general in Guyenne, Jacques de Goyon, marshal de Matignon; and that the Protestants saw him as a key man, loyal but fair-minded, to whom to explain such actions as their seizure of Mont-de-Marsan on November 21, 1583.<sup>7</sup>

The picture of Montaigne's relations with Henry III is fragmentary but consistent and clear. The king knew him as a subject in whose ability and unswerving loyalty he could put his full trust.

## II. MONTAIGNE AND CATHERINE DE' MEDICI

The only certain sign of dealings between the Queen Mother and Montaigne is his report<sup>8</sup> of her prompt intervention (July 10, 1588) to procure his release from the Bastille, where Leaguers had locked him up in retaliation for the imprisonment by the king at Rouen of one of their men. In all probability, however, a significant acquaintanceship had long existed between them.<sup>9</sup>

Catherine's virtual rule over young Charles IX makes her the likely originator of the two known honors (Order of Saint Michael, gentleman of the king's chamber) which came to Montaigne in 1571 and by 1573, probably for services rendered, and of an important commission that remains somewhat mysterious. The historian Jacques de Thou reports<sup>10</sup> that his old friend Montaigne, discussing the causes of the present troubles late in 1588 at the Estates of Blois, told him that he had once sought to mediate between Navarre and Guise when they were both at court. The burden of Montaigne's remarks—the rivalry between the two princes; Guise's attempts to win Navarre's friendship; Navarre's implacable hos-

6. Quoted from Dr. J.-F. Payen, *Documents inédits ou peu connus sur Montaigne* (1847), p. 28.

7. See below, p. 169.

8. In his entry under this date on his copy of Beuther's *Ephemeris historica* (hereafter *Ephemeris*), published by Jean Marchand (1948) with the title *Le Livre de raison de Montaigne*.

9. In "Le Secret des Essais," *BSAM*, n. s. 16 (1953-54), pp. 34-58, Nicolai argues that Montaigne's main aim in the *Essais* was to support, probably at her behest, Catherine's policy of conciliation. The case is not implausible, the evidence inconclusive.

10. *Historiarum sui temporis libri CXXXVIII* (London, 1733, 7 v.), VII, *De vita sua*, p. 88.

tility, soon answered in kind by Guise and making mediation futile; and the indifference of both men to the religious issue—concerns us here only as a sign of Montaigne's long-standing knowledge of, and relation with, Guise as well as Navarre. It remains that some time between 1572 and 1576 (the only period that fits De Thou's account), Montaigne, as far as we know still a relatively undistinguished figure, was asked to attempt an important reconciliation. Whether this was under Charles IX or Henry III, the person likeliest to have initiated it is the Queen Mother, whose passion for negotiation and faith in it are common knowledge.

A complex question is the identity of the Montaigne whom Catherine summoned to her conferences with Navarre at Saint-Brice in 1586–87. On December 31, 1586, she wrote from Cognac to one of her treasurers, Raoul Féron, saying she was writing to tell Montaigne to report to her with his wife, and ordering Féron to pay Montaigne 150 crowns besides the 100 paid him just lately, to allow him to replace a horse for his "chariotte," pay for a trip to Cognac "par les champs," and buy needed clothes for himself and his wife.<sup>11</sup> Her letter may refer not to Michel but to her secretary François Montaigne.

The Montaigne in question was first identified, by Ruble and by Baguenault de Puchesse,<sup>12</sup> as Michel; but in 1900 Ernest Courbet flatly rejected this theory,<sup>13</sup> and most later students of Montaigne have followed his lead. However, in 1928 Alan M. Boase showed some of the strength of the case for Michel;<sup>14</sup> and in 1954 Roger Trinquet refuted Courbet's objections and established a clear probability in favor of Michel.<sup>15</sup> His main points may be summarized as follows:

1. Catherine's reference simply to "Montaigne" (not to "Monsieur de Montaigne" or the like) is inconclusive; she refers to a number of other titled persons by their name alone.

2. Her term "hardes" was not at all pejorative in her day.

11. "Me Raoul Féron, mon conseiller tresorier et receveur general, pour ce que j'escriptz à Montaigne que luy et sa femme me viennent trouver, je veulx et vous ordonne que vous luy fournissiez, oultre les C escus que vous luy avez ja baillez ces jours icy, encores cent cinquante escus, tant pour renouveler ung des chevaùlx de sa chariotte, que pour satisfaire à la despense extraordinaire, venans par les champs, que aussy pour l'achapt de quelques hardes qui leur sont necessaires; et en prenant quittance dudit Montaigne de ladicte somme de CL escus, elle vous sera passée et allouée en la despense de voz comptes sans difficulté.

Faict à Congnac, le dernier jour de decembre 1586.

Catherine."

Catherine de' Medici, *Lettres* (1880–1943, 11 v.), IX, 132.

12. In their respective editions of Aubigné, *Histoire universelle*, VII (1893), 61 n. 1, and Catherine de' Medici, *Lettres*, IX, 132, 584.

13. In Montaigne, *Essais*, ed. Courbet and Royer (1872–1900, 5 v.), V, cxli n. 2.

14. "Montaigne annoté par Florimond de Raemond," *Revue du Seizième Siècle*, XV (1928), 265; cf. pp. 263–64, 266.

15. "Du nouveau dans la biographie de Montaigne," *RHL*, LIV (1954), 1–22.

3. The "chariotte," a two-wheeled cart with a litter used to transport people in the country, is not a shockingly plebeian vehicle for the Montaignes to use. In fact only three carriages were to be found in Bordeaux before 1589, when they became popular.

4. The amount of money issued (250 crowns, or 750 livres, in all) is fully in keeping with expenses paid to noblemen for trips, and by no means niggardly; whereas it represents almost two years' worth of François Montaigne's annual wages of 400 livres.

5. François Montaigne, who was merely one, and not the chief, of Catherine's 108 secretaries, was unlikely to elicit such concern or to command such generous expenses.

6. Montaigne's flight from the plague (whose chronology M. Trinquet so masterfully established) was still in progress; probably led him in the general direction of Cognac (about 60 miles north-northwest of Montaigne); and, having now lasted three months or more, probably left him sartorially and financially ill equipped to appear before the Queen Mother and her entourage at so solemn a gathering.

7. The ex-mayor of Bordeaux was a natural person for Catherine to ask for help in dealing with the reluctant Henry of Navarre.

To his impressive arguments M. Trinquet might have added further evidence, which is mainly on his side. One item that he did not use is quite important. Less than two months after her first letter, on February 18, 1587 (thus still before the end of Montaigne's flight from the plague), Catherine wrote from Niort to her son the king:

Cependant, je vous diray aussi, Monsieur mon filz, que j'ay dict et commandé, suivant vostre intention, au sr de Malicorne ce que voulez estre fait de Montaigne; à quoy aussi je tiendray la main et à toute autre chose concernant vostre service, selon vostre intention, es provinces de deçà.<sup>16</sup>

At first glance this letter seems clearly to refer to Michel de Montaigne. Why indeed should the king send his mother instructions about one of her 108 secretaries, and should she call on the governor of Poitou to carry them out? She still speaks of "Montaigne," not "Monsieur de Montaigne," and the man is clearly to be manipulated; but this is not surprising between a queen mother and her king. Moreover, the association of his employment with the southwest of France ("es provinces de deçà") fits Michel far better than François.

However, here are further complications. Of the four references in Catherine's letter that clearly designate a secretarial Montaigne, who writes a fine hand,<sup>17</sup> one (January 4, 1579) calls him "le petit Mon-

16. *Lettres*, IX, 176. Jean de Chourses, seigneur de Malicorne, was governor of Poitou.

17. *Lettres*, II, 95 (Sept. 8, 1563); VI, 201 (Jan. 4, 1579); VII, 133 (Sept. 17, 1579); VIII, 179 (April 8, 1584). The volume indexes by Baguenault de Puchesse offer some

taigne"; two add nothing; the fourth troubles the waters. From her château of Montceaux in Brie, on April 8, 1584, Catherine writes the following postscript in her own hand to her *secrétaire d'Etat* Villeroy in Paris: "Je vous envoie une lettre de Monteyne à sa femme; voyé-la, et, après, la monstre au Roy et la feré baller [bailler] à sa femme."<sup>18</sup>

Catherine's spelling of the name here is not significant, merely impressionistic as usual. The postscript can hardly apply to Michel;<sup>19</sup> it sounds just like a friendly joke on a secretary, to whom the Queen Mother may well have dictated the letter to which she then added this bit; it fits François very well. But if indeed it refers to him, it shows that he was married (like the Montaigne summoned to Saint-Brice) and well enough known to the king for the latter to take an interest (apparently humorous) in his letter to his wife.

Also favoring François's candidacy are the following verses from a scurrilous lampoon circulated at court late in 1581 and quoted by Pierre de L'Estoile under the title "Pasquil courtisan":

Tandis que, d'un autre côté,  
Pour entretenir sa santé,  
La reine fait frotter son lard  
A Montaigne, aussi à Pinard,  
Et le plus souvent les empêche  
A veiller après ses dépêches.<sup>20</sup>

Though this lampoon should not lead us to consider seriously an illicit relationship between Catherine and François Montaigne, it shows his reputation as an important and trusted member of her staff.

All this suggests the following conclusion. M. Trinquet's arguments established the clear probability that Michel was the Montaigne whom Catherine summoned to Saint-Brice. Her later letter to Henry III markedly heightens that probability. Though the case for François is by no means negligible, the total present evidence strongly favors Michel.

In short, the man on whose behalf Catherine intervened so promptly to free him from the Bastille in 1588 was very probably one on whom, as a reasonable and universally trusted negotiator, she had already called at least twice at an interval of about a dozen years.

different identifications but are very erratic; see for example VIII, 160, 561. André Lesort does much better in the *Index général* (v. XI), p. 185, but cannot help us much. He lists "le petit Montaigne" (VI, 201) as François's son.

18. *Lettres*, VIII, 179.

19. His letters place him in Montaigne on January 21, 1584 and in Castéra (Médoc) on April 23. A trip to Paris and Montceaux in between by the mayor of Bordeaux and his wife is extremely unlikely.

20. *Journal de L'Estoile pour le règne de Henri III*, ed. Lefèvre (5th ed., c. 1943), p. 284.



## III. MONTAIGNE AND MATIGNON

Montaigne's long and cordial relations with Marshal de Matignon are too well known to need full rehearsal here. The two men probably met at the siege of La Fère toward the end of June, 1580, but may have known each other already. Montaigne's sixteen known letters to Matignon, written over the period between October 30, 1582 and February 16, 1588; his reference to him in a letter of January 18, 1590, to Henry IV; Navarre's letters to Matignon dated May 10, 1584, April 24 and June 6, 1585; and Matignon's letter to Montaigne of June 13, 1585,<sup>21</sup> all give a clear picture of consistently harmonious teamwork in maintaining the king's authority without encroaching on that of Henry of Navarre. Eight years older than Montaigne, Matignon was to succeed him as mayor of Bordeaux and to die five years after him (1597) after twelve years in office. Suffering alike from the kidney stone, to which Montaigne's letters sometimes allude, the two men were united by a more important bond: their firm dedication to the loyalist cause without hatred toward its enemies. As Montaigne's letter of June 12, 1587 suggests and as M. Trinquet has noted, Matignon's friendship for Montaigne may have cooled for a time after the siege of Castillon; but from all the evidence available, their relations before and after were consistently close and cordial.

## IV. MONTAIGNE AND DIANE D'ANDOINS

Montaigne's relations with the finest of Navarre's mistresses have been amply and admirably treated by M. Ritter in his biography,<sup>22</sup> whose title is a quotation from the *Essais*. Their acquaintance was older than hers with Navarre; M. Ritter dates it to a meeting in December, 1579, in Bordeaux, at the house of her relative and Montaigne's friend François de Foix-Candale, Bishop of Aire. Only three months later the first *Essais* appeared, and in them a significant and cordial dedication (I: 29) of the 29 sonnets of Montaigne's dead friend La Boétie with which he replaced the same friend's *Servitude volontaire*. Less than a year later, Corisande was a widow: her turbulent husband Philibert de Gramont had an arm shot off at La Fère and died soon after (August 6, 1580). Montaigne accompanied his body to Soissons as that of a man "qui m'étoit fort amy."<sup>23</sup>

21. Matignon's letter to Montaigne is quoted in *Archives Historiques du Département de la Gironde* (hereafter *AHG*), X (1868), 402. Throughout this article, Montaigne's letters are quoted or cited from Armaingaud's edition (hereafter Armaingaud) of Montaigne's *Œuvres complètes*, XI, 159-265; those of Henry of Navarre from Henri IV, *Recueil des Lettres missives*, ed. Berger de Xivrey, 1843-76, 9 v.

22. *Cette Grande Corisande*, pp. 77-92, 187-206, 212, 246-55; *Une Dame de chevalerie*, pp. 67-76, 147-61, 165, 195-204, 337-38. Diane adopted the name Corisande from her beloved *Amadis de Gaule*.

23. *Ephemeris*, August 6; cf. *Essais*, 1950 Pléiade ed., III: 4, pp. 936-37.



The few letters we have by Corisande and by Montaigne fail clearly to confirm Mendoza's and Stafford's reports of his influence over her and hers over Navarre. One letter from Montaigne to Matignon, however (January 18, 1585) shows the tenor of his advice; and her letters to Navarre in the ensuing months suggest that she heeded it.<sup>24</sup> Navarre, violently opposed by the League and others as heir presumptive to the throne, was already being urged by Henry III through his emissary Epernon to return to Catholicism, but feared this would lose him his Protestant support and not win that of the Catholics. A month before, he had paid his first visit to Montaigne (*Ephemeris*, December 19, 1584) with more than thirty of his chief followers, showing his complete faith in his host by sleeping in his bed and having none but his men serve him. Montaigne had long been working for harmony between the two royal Henries, which appeared to him the brightest, perhaps the only, hope of France. Since that visit, Montaigne writes to Matignon, he has heard so much from one of the visitors, Raymond de Bissouse, about the high esteem in which Montaigne's good counsel and Matignon's good will are held by another visitor of December 19, one of Navarre's chief supporters, Henri de la Tour, vicomte de Turenne, that he (Montaigne) has written to Turenne urging him to work for a meeting between Navarre and Matignon and saying, among other things, that he (again Montaigne) has written to Diane d'Andoins asking her to help Navarre by wise conduct and advice:

que j'avois escrit à madame de Guissen de se servir du tamps pour la commodité de son navire a quoi je m'emploierois envers vous et que je lui avois done conseil de n'engager a ses passions l'interest et la fortune de ce prince et puis qu'elle pourroit tant sur lui de regarder plus à son utilite qu'à ses humeurs particulieres . . .<sup>25</sup>

#### V. MONTAIGNE AND HENRY OF NAVARRE

Here again we are on familiar ground. The earliest relation between the two men of which we have evidence—Montaigne's attempt, discussed above, to mediate between Guise and Navarre—goes back to the years 1572–76 and obviously presupposes some earlier acquaintance. Navarre's action in making Montaigne a gentleman in ordinary of his chamber on November 30, 1577, suggests services performed and shows confidence in the man and his capacity. His letter of award refers to "le bon et louable rapport que fait nous a esté de la personne de notre cher et bien aymé Michel de Montaigne, . . . de ses sens, suffisante doctrine, vertu, valeur et recommandables mérites . . ."<sup>26</sup>

24. *Corisande*, pp. 213–15; *Une Dame de chevalerie*, pp. 166–68.

25. Armaingaud, XI, 233–34. Diane d'Andoins was comtesse de Guiche or Guissen.

26. Quoted from Nicolai, "Les Grandes Dates de la vie de Montaigne," *BSAM*, 2e sér. 13–14 (Oct. 1948–Jan. 1949), p. 34.

Montaigne tells us that the honor came in his absence and unbeknownst to him; he does not enlighten us about the reasons.

Henry of Navarre's strong concern over the administration of Bordeaux in 1581, extending to the choice not only of the new mayor but also of the three new jurats, is clear from his letter of July 6 to Bellièvre. He reports that Biron, whom he detested as an overaggressive rival, whose replacement by Matignon as lieutenant-general in Guyenne he had procured, and who still had a few more weeks left as mayor of Bordeaux, was intriguing to be continued as mayor or succeeded by his son and to have new jurats favorable to him elected. As we have noted, Montaigne had probably already been chosen, late in 1580 at Le Fleix, with Navarre's approval, as Biron's successor.

It is for Montaigne's second term as mayor (1583-85) that we have by far the most evidence of the cordial trust placed in him by Henry of Navarre. From November 9, 1583 to about January 18, 1584 Navarre's leading adviser Philippe de (Duplessis-) Mornay addressed five friendly letters to Montaigne explaining on behalf of his master the current Protestant grievances and their seizure of Mont-de-Marsan, and once referring to a letter to Montaigne from Navarre himself.<sup>27</sup> December 14, 1583 finds the mayor of Bordeaux at Mont-de-Marsan pleading with Navarre on behalf of his city's shipping;<sup>28</sup> and though he expresses little hope for his plea, it prompted Navarre to write angrily to Matignon three days later urging him to remedy the situation. On May 10, 1584, Montaigne is at Pau with Henry of Navarre, who writes a cordial letter to Matignon, apparently for Montaigne to take to him, adding to his good wishes: "mais mon<sup>r</sup> de Montaigne vous dira le surplus." On December 19, as we have seen, he honors Montaigne with a visit followed by a two-day stag-hunt in Montaigne's forest. In January, 1585, trying to arrange for Navarre and Matignon to meet, Montaigne offers to go along if Matignon wants. On April 24, a few days after assisting Matignon in ousting the dangerous Leaguer Vaillac from the Château Trompette in Bordeaux, Montaigne is again with Navarre in Bergerac and again bearing a message to Matignon, whom Henry urges to believe the bearer completely. Another letter, very similar but undated, was probably written at about the same time; still another from Sainte-Foy is dated June 6, 1585.<sup>29</sup> Florimond de Raemonnd did not exaggerate when he wrote that a passage in the *Essais* referred to "Henri IV, duquel étant Roi de Navarre il [Montaigne] était fort privé."<sup>30</sup> M. Ritter is on solid ground in arguing that serious

27. Philippe de (Duplessis-) Mornay, *Mémoires et correspondance* (1824-25, 12 v.), II, 382-83, 385-87, 393-94, 401-02, 518-19.

28. See Montaigne's letter of this date in Armaingaud, XI, 225-26.

29. *Recueil des Lettres missives*, I, 601-02, 661; II, 45, 69-70; IX, 205.

30. Quoted from Boase article, p. 263.

talk passed between the two men when Navarre stopped off at Montaigne just three days after his first great victory at Coutras.

Montaigne was of course a staunch loyalist, many aspects of whose Catholicism are best understood as a reaction against what he considered Protestant exegetical presumption; but even during Navarre's excommunication, when, as he wrote him later, "il m'en falloit confesser à mon curé,"<sup>31</sup> he hoped stoutly for his success. It is clear that his future king cordially returned his subject's trust and respect.

#### VI. THE DOCUMENTS, OLD AND NEW

Although only two of the following items (the excerpts from Stafford's letters) are new, it seems best to bring them all together here for comparison and study.

October 20, 1587. Henry of Navarre wins his first important victory of the religious wars at Coutras over the army of Joyeuse, sent by the king under League pressure. Joyeuse and his brother Saint-Sauveur are killed. Navarre sends the bodies, with a letter of deploration, to Matignon, whose delay in coming up to join forces with Joyeuse was probably decisive.

October 23, 1587. Henry of Navarre, for the second time only, spends the night at Montaigne. His host makes no note of this, as he usually would, in any record that we possess.<sup>32</sup> Navarre goes on, soon to bring to Corisande at Navarrenx (November 9) the banners won at Coutras.

January 24, 1588. Philippe de (Duplessis-) Mornay, influential adviser to Navarre, writes from Montauban to his wife in Nérac:

Surtout ne te travaille point l'esprit, car il n'y en a nulle occasion. Je t'escrips le mesme et de ce mesme jour par la mesme voie. Nostre armée s'avance fort en Allemagne. Monsieur de Montaigne est allé en court. On nous dit que nous serons bien tost recerchez de paix par personnes neutres.<sup>33</sup>

February 1, 1588 (dated January 22, 1587).<sup>34</sup> Sir Edward Stafford, the English ambassador to France, reports to his chief, Principal Secretary Sir Francis Walsingham, in a letter from Paris:

31. Letter of January 18, 1590; in Armaingaud, XI, 259.

32. Unless we count his statement (*Essais*, III: 9; Pléiade ed., p. 1106) that royalty stayed at Montaigne more than once.

33. Madame de Mornay, *Mémoires* (1868-69, 2 v.), II, 148.

34. Although Catholic countries promptly adopted the Pope's new Gregorian calendar in 1582, moving the calendar ahead with the loss of ten days, so that December 20 (old style) became December 30 (new style), the English clung to the old style until 1750, promptly instructing their envoys on the continent not to adopt the "new style" of their hosts. Since they also clung to the other "old style" of starting the year at Easter, Stafford records dates before Easter as 1587 which we reckon as 1588. Stafford's dating of Condé's death and his dating of the day of the Barricades show that he used old style in both senses. All dates throughout the present article are new style.

There is news come today that the Marshal Matignon's son is coming hither, and is looked for every hour; that he bringeth with him one Montigny, a very wise gentleman of the King of Navarre, whom he hath given his word to present unto the King. I never heard of the man afore in my life.<sup>35</sup>

February 16, [1588], A. M. Montaigne writes to Matignon from Orléans:<sup>36</sup>

Monseigneur vous aves sceu nostre bagage pris a la forest de villebois à nostre veue depuis apres beaucoup de barbouillage et de longur la prinse jugee injuste par monsieur le prince Nous n'osions cependant passer outre pour l'incertitude de la surete de nos personnes de quoi nous devons estre esclercis sur nos passeports Le ligueu a faict cet prinse qui prit m<sup>r</sup> de Barraut et m<sup>r</sup> de la rochefocaut La tampeste est tumbée sur moi qui avois mon arjant en ma boîte Je nen ai rien recouvert et la plus part de mes papiers Et hardes leur sont demurees Nous ne vismes pas monsieu le prince Il s'est perdu cinquante tant descus pour monsieur le comte de Thorigny<sup>37</sup> un'eviere darjant et quelques hardes de peu Il a destourne son chemin en poste pour aller voir les dames explorees a montresor ou sont les cors des deus freres<sup>38</sup> et de la grand mere et nous reprint hier en cete ville dou nous partons presentement. Le voiage de normandie est remis Le roy a despesche messieurs de Bellievre et de la guiche vers monsieur de guise pour le semondre de venir a la court Nous y serons judi.<sup>39</sup>

D'Orléans ce 16 fevr. au matin.

Vostre treshumble servitur

Montaigne

February 20, 1588 (dated February 10, 1587). Stafford writes to his main sponsor, William Cecil, Lord Burghley, Lord Treasurer of England, in a letter from Paris:

I [have] written to Mr. Secretary in a letter in cipher—I cannot tell whether he will show it—of the coming of one Montaigne here from the King of Navarre, sent with Matignon's son; and how all the King of Navarre's servants here are jealous of his coming, being neither addressed to them nor knowing<sup>40</sup> any tittle of the cause, and besides (to your lordship I may write it) . . . they suspect it the more because he is a great favourite of the Countess of Bishe,<sup>41</sup> who they say governeth the King of Navarre as she listeth, and is a very dangerous woman; and who marreth the King

35. *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth, 1586-1588* (v. XXI part I; London: Stationery Office, 1927), p. 488.

36. Some problems concerning this letter are discussed below, pp. 178-79.

37. Matignon's son Odet, comte de Thorigny (1559-95).

38. The duc de Joyeuse and his brother Saint-Sauveur.

39. February 16 being a Tuesday, "judi" would be February 18.

40. Neither [he] being addressed to them nor [they] knowing . . .

41. Diane d'Andoins, comtesse de Guiche. Puns and mistakes about her name were common. L'Estoile (*Journal . . . Henri III*, p. 537; year 1587) quotes the satiric "Bibliothèque de Madame de Montpensier," item 75, *Discours sur la blessure du roi de Navarre par un poulain, en courant une biche*, and adds this note of his own: "La comtesse La Biche que le roi de Navarre entretenait."

of Navarre's reputation throughout all the world; for he is altogether asstotted, as they say, upon her. They fear, and so do I too, that he is come to treat with [*sic*] some private matter with the King, unknown to all of them of the Religion; for sure no man knoweth anything of it, and think that neither du Plessis, Vicomte Turenne nor any affected in religion are anything acquainted with it. Besides, the man is a Catholic, a very sufficient man; was once Mayor of Bordeaux, and one that would not take a charge to bring anything to the King that should not please him. Nor the Marshal Matignon would not have taken upon him to have given him to conduct to his own son, without he had been very sure his commission should please and not displease the King. I did not write in my long letter by Mr. 'Hacklytt' without purpose that I feared the King of Navarre would be constrained either willingly or against his will to content the King; which I would fain not have done without the Queen's knowledge, and she had in some kind still an oar in their boat.<sup>42</sup>

February 25, 1588. Don Bernardino de Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador to France, writes in a letter to King Philip II from Paris:<sup>43</sup>

De Erac ay aqui cartas frescas que reffieren aver se visto el de Bearne con Memoranci,<sup>44</sup> y resultado del abocamiento no poder declarar su resolucion el de Bearne hasta fin de Março, que en el abocamiento avian ydo de ordinario dos gentileshombres de Mos de Matignon Governador de Bourdeaulx con cartas y mensajes que da a entender continuar la comunicacion secreta que este Rey se dize tener con el de Bearne, y en este lugar se entiende aver llegado Mosiur de Montaña que es Gentilhombre catholico y sigue al de Bearne con direction de Matignon, y por no saber los que hazen los negocios del de Bearne la causa de su venida sospechan traer alguna comission secreta . . .

February 28, 1588. Mendoza again writes to Philip II from Paris:

Monsr de Montaña que scrivo a V. Md. en una de las de 25 estiman por hombre de entendimiento, aunque algo desbaratado me dizen gobierna a la Condesa de la Guisa,<sup>45</sup> que es dama muy hermosa. y esta con la hermana<sup>46</sup> del de Bearne por ser dama de su hermano con quien dizen que

42. *Calendar of State Papers. Foreign. Elizabeth. 1586-1588*, p. 510. "Mr. Hacklytt" is the eminent geographer Richard Hakluyt, then chaplain and secretary at Stafford's embassy.

43. This and the following letter are in the Archivo General de Simancas, Estado K. 1567, nos. 24-27 and 29; they are quoted with the gracious assistance and permission of the Director, Dr. Ricardo Magdaleno. M. Ritter's French translations are impeccable, but some readers may wish to see the original texts and the relevant context.

44. Henri I, duc de Montmorency (Damville), a leader of the Politiques, Catholic ally of Navarre, and virtual king of Languedoc. Though Navarre eagerly sought the conference rumored here, he had to content himself with negotiating through Turenne. See Madame de Mornay, *Mémoires*, I, 166; *Calendar of State Papers. Foreign. Elizabeth. 1586-1588*, p. 517; Mornay, *Mémoires et correspondance*, IV, 119-26, 141.

The Spaniards, holding part of Navarre, refused to recognize Henry as king of Navarre and referred to him regularly as "the man from Bearn."

45. Again Diane d'Andoins, comtesse de Guiche or Guissen.

46. Henry's sister Catherine de Bourbon was one of Corisande's dearest friends.

trata el de Bearne y por esto juzgan el tratar alguna comission y querer el Rey valer se del Montaña para que haga officios con la dicha Condesa de la Guisa persuada al de Bearne venga en lo que el Rey dessea.

Los Uguenotes afirman que en el abocamiento de Memoranci, confirmo y juro el Memoranci de nuello la liga que tiene con el.

#### VII. SIR EDWARD STAFFORD

The writer of the two "new" letters, Sir Edward Stafford, well deserves our attention in his own right and as a probable source, if not *the* source, of Mendoza's information about Montaigne. On the face of it, of course, this seems most unlikely. Few men have worked more devotedly for a cause than did Mendoza for the "enterprise," that is to say the conquest, of England.<sup>47</sup> A brave army officer in his younger days, he lost none of his militant zeal when his diplomatic skill forced him out of regular warfare. Expelled from England for complicity in Throckmorton's plot against the life of Queen Elizabeth on behalf of Mary Queen of Scots, he declared he no longer wanted to live except for vengeance on the impudent English, and would have it, God willing, if he had to beg his bread from door to door. He was a man of his word. Appointed ambassador to France less than a year later, he spent his money and his eyes serving the cause of his king against England and of militant Catholicism against all Protestants and moderates. The defeat of the Armada, no fault of his, did not keep him soon after from leading the defense of Paris against Henry IV.

Estimates of Stafford differ widely because of his relations with Mendoza, which are part clear, part enigmatic. Leading authorities have long debated whether Sir Edward's sale of information to the Spaniard was treachery or whether, perhaps quite honorably, he played a double game, seeking information for himself and his queen by giving Mendoza some false intelligence and none of any importance unless too late to be useful.<sup>48</sup> Evidence abounds on either side of this most complex question. At times Stafford clearly was not the willing tool that Mendoza thought him; yet he did sell him news, and he seems to have learned much less from Mendoza than the Spaniard learned from him.

Certain things are clear. Stafford leaned strongly to the conservative

47. Mendoza is a leading character, vividly portrayed, in Garrett Mattingly's admirable *The Armada*. His important role in France is well treated in De Lamar Jensen's unpublished Columbia dissertation, *Bernardino de Mendoza and the League* (1957). I am much indebted to Professor Mattingly for generous and wise advice to a novice in the complexities of Renaissance diplomacy.

48. The late Conyers Read stoutly maintained that Stafford was a real traitor; see especially *American Historical Review*, XX (1915), 292-313; XXXV (1930), 560-66. Sir John E. Neale argues strongly for the double game in *English Historical Review*, XLIV (1929), 203-19.



policy of his sponsor William Cecil, Lord Burghley, Lord Treasurer of England,<sup>49</sup> and opposed the militant Protestant policy of his direct superior, Principal Secretary Sir Francis Walsingham, who mistrusted him. He was fond of gambling and often in debt. He showed bitterness over Mendoza's appointment as ambassador to France in view of his recent activities in England, and two years later over the favored treatment accorded Mendoza by the French.<sup>50</sup>

However, already in October, 1584, only a year after Stafford took up his duties in Paris, Mendoza's predecessor had corresponded with King Philip over the report that he could be bought. On May 11, 1586, Mendoza reported having learned from Henri de Guise that the needy Stafford had sold him for 3,000 crowns information delivered by Charles Arundell, who was working for Guise and was constantly at Stafford's house. Six months later (November 8) Mendoza wrote Philip of trying to induce Stafford to give Spain information via Arundell, as he was doing for the (Catholic) Scottish ambassador. On January 24, 1587 Mendoza reports great progress. Angry at Navarre, "Stafford . . . swore . . . that now was the time for your Majesty to make use of him . . . if you wished any service done. He pressed Arundell to ascertain from your Majesty in what way he might serve you, and you should see by his acts how willing he was to do so." Already, he says, Stafford tells Arundell "everything he learns, under the conviction that not a word reaches my ears. This ambassador is much pressed for money, and even if he had not made such an offer as this, his poverty is reason enough to expect from him any service, if he saw it was to be remunerated . . . If we are to continue negotiations with him, he is so poor that a good present must be given to him . . ." And Mendoza recommends 2,000 crowns for the purchase of a jewel, as an earnest of what Stafford may expect. Three months later the 2,000 crowns are given and received with grateful protestations "that, saving the person of the Queen, he [Stafford] would devote himself to whatever service your Majesty required, with the zeal which I should witness."<sup>51</sup>

Soon after this Stafford's name disappears from Mendoza's dispatches as an informant; but for some time at least he seems clearly to be the man referred to as "the new confidant," "Julius," and sometimes "Julio," and from whom Mendoza receives information through the intermediary Charles Arundell. After Arundell's death (which Mendoza

49. Mendoza describes him as "a creature of Cecil's" (*Calendar of State Papers. Spanish. 1587-1603* [v. IV], p. 7).

50. *Calendar of State Papers. Foreign. Elizabeth. 1584-1585* (v. XIX), pp. 141, 165; 1586-1588, p. 96.

51. *Calendar of State Papers. Spanish. 1580-1586* (v. III), pp. 528, 575-76, 648; 1587-1603, pp. 7-8, 75.



first reports on December 27, 1587), communication becomes a problem. The "new confidant" will not risk being seen going to Mendoza's house; a new intermediary is hard to find; Mendoza must go to the confidant's house at night to see him. This is risky, but, he believes, worthwhile; he writes to King Philip on January 16, 1588: "I had to wait until night before I could go and hear the news from my new confidant, who turns himself inside out for me."<sup>52</sup>

Whatever Stafford's true role may have been, our main concern with him here is as the possible source of Mendoza's information about Montaigne's arrival. The evidence for this may be summed up as follows. In early 1588 he was supplying Mendoza regularly with information. He reported Montaigne's trip more than three weeks before Mendoza did, and his arrival, in full, five days before. On the days of both Mendoza's reports (February 25 and 28) his letters tell of interviews with "the new confidant."<sup>53</sup> Mendoza's two accounts of Montaigne's arrival read almost like a summary of Stafford's second letter.<sup>54</sup>

#### VIII. SOME QUESTIONS LITTLE AFFECTED BY STAFFORD'S LETTERS

1. What was Montaigne doing between October 23, 1587 and about January 23, 1588? Was he in fairly close contact with Matignon and possibly with Navarre? May we assume a close connection between the events of October and those of January?

2. Was Montaigne hoping to confer with Guise (whom he must once have known rather well to have attempted to mediate between him and Navarre) as well as with Henry III? His letter suggests the possibility, and Strowski believed in it.<sup>55</sup> However, the mission of Bellièvre and La Guiche to Guise was a matter of general concern and comment; Montaigne's reference in his letter may, as seems likely to me, be merely a relevant bit of news, like the preceding item about the postponement of Epernon's trip to Normandy.

3. What did Navarre and Montaigne talk about at Montaigne three days after Coutras?

M. Ritter seems to go as far as one can with his hypothesis<sup>56</sup> that Montaigne urged Henry to consolidate his position as heir presumptive

52. Ibid. (1587-1603), p. 194; cf. pp. 182-83.

53. Ibid., p. 213, 222-23.

54. The only discrepancies are the different misspellings of the name "Guiche" and the different estimates of Montaigne. All Mendoza adds is that Corisande is staying with her lover's sister Catherine. These differences are not surprising in view of the five-day interval between Stafford's second letter and Mendoza's first and the likelihood that Stafford was not Mendoza's only source of information about Montaigne.

55. *Montaigne, sa vie publique et privée*, p. 246.

56. *Une Dame de chevalerie*, pp. 201-03; *BSAM*, 3e sér. 9, pp. 12-13.

by abjuration and offered to discuss with Henry III the possibility of an accord.

I see little light in the new documents on these large questions.

#### IX. SOME INFERENCES SUGGESTED BY STAFFORD'S LETTERS

1. Stafford's sources of news, in the south and in Paris, seem reliable and well-informed. His picture of persons, motives, and Protestant concern is convincing and fits what is already known. Mornay's letter of January 24 supports the opinion that even he (the du Plessis of Stafford's second letter) is in the dark about the message Montaigne carried. The misspelling "Bishe" may even be an error of transcription.

2. Stafford's picture of the Protestants in Paris as being aware of Montaigne's coming well fits Marie de Gournay's account of her first meeting with him.<sup>57</sup> Already Montaigne's letter of February 16 clarified her story; his capture might well lead to reports of his death, soon contradicted, then disproved by his arrival. Stafford's account of Montaigne's trip as important news further explains such rumors circulating at court.

3. Mendoza seems to deserve a little less credit for his alertness in spotting Montaigne's arrival than has properly been given him on the basis of previous evidence.

4. The fact that Montaigne made the trip with Matignon's son is more significant than had been supposed. Matignon must have sponsored the trip. His son Odet, comte de Thorigny (1559-95), future lieutenant-general in Normandy, was already a noted soldier in his own right.

5. The authenticity of Montaigne's letter of February 16, 1588, generally accepted ever since Payen's time, is further confirmed by the timing of Stafford's report of Montaigne's arrival and by his emphasis on the role of the younger Matignon as escort.

6. It seems likely that Montaigne was with Matignon at Moissac, about 15 miles west-northwest of Navarre's headquarters at Montauban,<sup>58</sup> when he was sent on his mission escorted by Matignon's son.

In his new version of the trip<sup>59</sup> M. Ritter discusses this possibility

57. "Ayant receu comme elle luy vouloit écrire un faux advis qu'il estoit mort; elle en souffrit un déplaisir extrême . . . Soudain ayant un contraire advis, suivi de l'heureuse arrivée de luy-mesme à la Cour et à Paris, où pour lors suivant sa mère elle estoit venue passer quelque temps; elle l'envoya saluer . . ." *Copie de la vie de mademoiselle de Gournay*, quoted from Nicolai, *Les Belles Amies*, p. 174.

58. The chronology in *Recueil des Lettres missives* (II, 604) places Henry of Navarre in Montauban January 8-25 and January 31-February 8, and near there for the six days in between. Letters from Mornay in Montauban note Matignon's arrival in Moissac on January 14 and his presence there on the 16th (Madame de Mornay, *Mémoires*, II, 140, 144); the editor of a letter to Matignon (*AHG*, XXIX, 233) places him still there on January 26. Cf. below, n. 63.

59. *Une Dame de chevalerie*, p. 203; *BSAM*, 3e sér. 9, p. 13.

but thinks it likelier that Montaigne remained at home. Much of the old evidence, however, suggested otherwise. From Montauban, about 80 miles from Montaigne's château, Mornay reports Michel's departure to his wife when she is about 30 miles nearer there than he and in Nérac, where news was not scarce. He refers to Montaigne's leaving ("Monsieur de Montaigne est allé en court") in the same way that he refers to other departures from in or near the place where he is staying.<sup>60</sup> Much had changed in the three months since Navarre's visit, and Montaigne might well need final instructions from him in person. The new evidence, with its heightened stress on the role of Matignon and with the report to Stafford emanating presumably from Montauban, makes it now seem likely that Montaigne was there or near by.

Montauban seems a much less likely headquarters for him than Moissac. Orders would come to him naturally from the king's lieutenant-general, Matignon, not from his adversary Navarre. Mendoza's and Stafford's second letters suggest this; so, even more strikingly, does Stafford's first. If Montaigne had been staying at Montauban, Stafford's agent, who presumably was there, might be expected to name him correctly and know something about him.<sup>61</sup> Stafford's report better fits the theory that Montaigne came to Moissac with Matignon or joined him there, then made a trip or two to Montauban, probably as Matignon's emissary, in any case to receive Navarre's instructions.

7. Montaigne probably left Moissac to start his mission on January 23 or 24.

Stafford's report of February 1 suggests approximately these dates. It reads as though his informant had written him a letter, probably from Montauban, shortly after Montaigne's departure. If this letter took about a week to reach Paris—as one may suppose; but travel times were very variable—it was sent about January 25.

Mornay did not mention Montaigne either in the deciphered part of a long letter to his wife dated 11 P.M. January 18 or in a short hasty one dated January 23 "après midy." In his letter of the 24th, which reports Montaigne's departure, Mornay says he wrote her what must be another, lost letter of the 23rd. (It is not the one that we have of the 23rd; for he says it told of the action before Braguerolles, and the letter we have does not.) Since he wrote his wife twice on the 23rd, probably at some length altogether, and since on the 24th

60. See his references to departures of Montlouet, Soissons, and Henry of Navarre in Madame de Mornay, *Mémoires*, II, 152, 153, 170.

61. Of course this argument could be used to place Montaigne at his château. However, present evidence seems to favor Moissac.

he writes her of Montaigne's departure as news, he probably learned it that day, and it probably occurred that day or the day before.<sup>62</sup>

8. A tentative chronology of Montaigne's trip now appears as follows.

He presumably left Moissac on January 23 or 24 with Odet de Thorigny, who had come there to break to his father the sad news, learned when he arrived at Bordeaux, of the death of his younger brother Lancelot, Matignon's second son, recently named bishop of Coutances.<sup>63</sup> We next find him at Orléans on his way to Paris on February 16. The party has been held up in the forest of Villebois; after much delay "monsieur le prince" has ruled the seizure unjust; they have waited meanwhile to be sure their passports will indeed guarantee their safety; then Thorigny, the younger Matignon, who has already (unless someone else did so) reported the seizure to his father, has made a hasty detour to present his condolences to the mourning Joyeuse ladies at Montrésor, about 60 miles south-southwest of Orléans, where on February 15 he has rejoined the party. Montaigne hopes to be in Paris on February 18. He may not have arrived until the 19th or 20th, since Stafford's letter of the 20th reads as though he had arrived less than two days before.<sup>64</sup>

We would understand Montaigne's letter of February 16 better if we could locate surely the forest of Villebois that he mentions. Lanson, who attributed the hold-up to the Huguenots, placed it in Angoumois,<sup>65</sup> but most scholars have followed Payen in locating it near Orléans.<sup>66</sup> It seems clear from the letter that Thorigny went to Montrésor *after* the hold-up. If he made this detour from Orléans or near there (as Montaigne's letter clearly does *not* suggest), he must have almost doubled back on his tracks for sixty miles, whereas a detour to the west from around Châteauroux (or between there and Romorantin<sup>67</sup> to the north) would have been a matter of about twenty miles. A difference of eighty miles round-trip was a big one at that time. It seems likely therefore that Montaigne's forest of Villebois was further to the southwest, like the forest that still exists between Villebois-la-Valette (Charente) and Angoulême, about ten miles to the north-

<sup>62</sup> Madame de Mornay, *Mémoires*, II, 145-48.

<sup>63</sup> Jacques de Callières (or Caillière), *Histoire du mareschal de Matignon* (1661), pp. 216-17.

<sup>64</sup> Stafford is not as explicit as one might wish about whether Montaigne has actually arrived in Paris or not. However, "the coming of one Montaigne *here*" contrasts with the earlier report "is coming *hither*" (*italics mine*); and the phrase "he is come" seems decisive.

<sup>65</sup> *Les Essais de Montaigne* (1930), p. 72.

<sup>66</sup> Among others, Jean Plattard, Alexandre Nicolaï, Maurice Rat.

<sup>67</sup> Both towns were on the 1632 post road between Paris and Bordeaux via Orléans; see Michel Tavernier's "Carte géographique des postes, 1632" in Jean Bonnerot's ed. of Charles Estienne, *La Guide des chemins de France de 1553* (1936, 2 v.), at end of v. II.

west. The 1632 post road from Bordeaux to Orléans passed about twenty-five miles south, then east of this forest; a straight line between Bordeaux and Orléans passes about ten miles (west, then north) on the other side. In short, a forest near Villebois-la-Valette seems a likely scene for the hold-up, a forest of Villebois near Orléans a very unlikely one.

If Villebois-la-Valette, or another Villebois in that general area, was the scene, then Condé (who until his sudden death less than a month later had his headquarters at Saint-Jean d'Angely, about sixty miles northwest of Villebois-la-Valette) is almost surely the "prince" of Montaigne's letter; and—considering Protestant wariness of Navarre's plans and the fact that our only text of the letter is a bad copy<sup>68</sup>—Montaigne may have been held up by Huguenots.

To return to the chronology. Assuming that Montaigne went home from Moissac, he probably reached there January 25 or 26. (He may have taken another day to go to Bordeaux instead, or to go there also.) Moving ahead to Orléans, we see that Thorigny rejoined the party there ("nous reprint hier") February 15; the party clearly was already there, and Montaigne's phrasing (on negative evidence, to be sure) suggests that it had arrived the day before or even earlier. The trip from Montaigne (or from Bordeaux) to Orléans in itself presumably took such a party at least seven or eight days; the considerable delay ("beaucoup de barbouillage et de longur") while the capture was reported to and judged by the prince was long enough for Montaigne to feel obliged to explain it to Matignon. All this suggests that his party left Montaigne (or Bordeaux) no later than February 3-6.

Whatever the precise chronology, the time unaccounted for is no more than about eight to twelve days (January 25-26 to February 3-6). Apart from the many possibilities of further delay—a trip or two to and from Bordeaux, floods in the area,<sup>69</sup> other business involving Thorigny, and the like—Montaigne's preparations for a mission to his king from the heir presumptive, which as far as we know kept him away from home almost a year,<sup>70</sup> might well require that much time.

9. Montaigne had few friends on his trip to Paris. The Protestants, fearing Navarre's defection, were jealous and mistrustful. The League and the Spaniards of course bitterly opposed any pact such as Mon-

68. Dr. Payen (*Documents inédits*, pp. 12-18) noted that our only MS of this letter was a poor copy of a lost original and that the word he rendered as "ligueu" (Montaigne's captor) looked more like "lignon."

69. Floods delayed Navarre's trip to Montauban in January (Madame de Mornay, *Mémoires*, II, 134-37) as they had delayed Montaigne in February 1585 (Armaingaud, XI, 244-45).

70. Montaigne apparently stayed in the north (Paris, court, Picardy, Blois) until late November or December, 1588. A decision of the Bordeaux Parlement, dated May 7, 1588 (*AHG*, XIX, 270-71) reads as though he was present, but not clearly enough to carry conviction.

taigne sought; even the English ambassador feared it unless through the intercession of Elizabeth, lest Navarre become too independent. This seems to make the identity and party of Montaigne's captors a more open question than many have thought. And if Montaigne had reason to suspect Protestant as well as League hostility, more credit to his courage and devotion for undertaking the mission.

10. Montaigne's trip was more important news than we had recognized. It was reported, presumably from Montauban, shortly after he left and was known in Paris by February 1. By the time he reached Paris or soon after, Huguenot circles there were buzzing.

11. Montaigne's press among political leaders was better than we had gathered from Mendoza. The picture of him presented by Stafford's second letter is one to warm the hearts of his admirers.

12. The importance of Diane de Gramont as an adviser to Henry of Navarre, and of Montaigne as adviser to her, so cogently deduced by M. Ritter from Mendoza's second letter, is strongly confirmed.<sup>71</sup>

13. Montaigne was a more private negotiator than we had recognized. The secret of his commission was apparently no better known to his Protestant contemporaries than it is to us.

This of course is not unnatural. For almost four years Henry III had been urging Henry of Navarre to abjure, seeing this as his own main hope<sup>72</sup> and relaxing his efforts only when forced by the League to attack his heretical heir. In January and March, 1588, Montmorency was reported to be working to the same purpose.<sup>73</sup> Navarre did not dare abjure for fear of losing his only sure support; but his followers did not trust him not to. Montaigne was a natural intermediary for his negotiations with his king.

14. Whatever its precise nature, Montaigne's commission from Henry of Navarre seems, from Stafford's second letter, to have been one that he and Matignon considered likely to please the king.

The success of the recruiting of the second army in Germany may have seemed a trump card to Navarre; for the conjunction of three sentences in Mornay's letter ("Nostre armée . . . personnes neutres.") may be significant. If it is, however, it may well merely reflect Mornay's hope that his master was not then considering abjuration.

Navarre's and Matignon's behavior toward the Joyeuse family sug-

71. See the books and article of M. Ritter already cited; also Henri IV, *Recueil des Lettres missives*, II, 318-49. While Navarre's delivery of the Coutras banners to Corisande instead of marching to meet the German allies increased Protestant resentment, and probably exaggeration, of her influence, it remains unquestionably very strong.

72. See for example Stafford's account to Elizabeth of an extraordinary secret talk with Henry III; *Calendar of State Papers. Foreign. Elizabeth. 1586-1588*, pp. 519-28; March 6, 1588 (dated Feb. 25, 1587).

73. See *Négociations diplomatiques de la France avec la Toscane*, ed. Canestrini and Desjardins (1859-86, 6 v.), IV, 741, 753.



gests an attempt to placate League feelings; for Joyeuse, though a *mignon* of the king, leaned to the League. After the death of the duke and his brother at Coutras, Navarre gave their entrails honorable burial on the spot, had their bodies escorted to Libourne by a secretary of Joyeuse, and wrote Matignon, a relative of theirs, deploring their death. Then Matignon's son, en route for Paris, went out of his way to present his condolences to the widows at Montrésor.<sup>74</sup>

The heavy emphasis in Stafford's letters on the role of Matignon and his son and on Protestant ignorance of the message Montaigne bore suggests that Montaigne was empowered to talk with Henry III about the possibility of Navarre's abjuration. Discouraged by the failure of the first army of his German allies, Navarre may well have wanted to know what guarantee of support Henry of France could give him if he consented, as he had long offered to do, to receive instruction in Catholic doctrine in the right way.<sup>75</sup>

Montaigne's mission seems to have had no immediate result; important events—the death of Condé in March, heightened League pressure, the Barricades and the flight from Paris in May—must soon have dimmed it in his king's memory. In all likelihood, however, it confirmed Henry III in his sound belief that of all his subjects the heretical heir presumptive, Henry of Navarre, was one of the most loyal and potentially his most valuable ally. If it did, it bore rich fruit.

74. See Navarre's letter of October 23, 1587 in *Recueil des Lettres missives*, II, 309–11; Montaigne's letter quoted above, p. 171.

75. The negotiations with Henry III carried on by Navarre's man, François de Montesquieu, seigneur de Sainte-Colombe, in January and February, 1588, presumably represent Navarre's official policy of firm resistance to abjuration. See *Calendar of State Papers. Foreign. Elizabeth. 1586–1588*, p. 488; Mornay, *Mémoires et correspondance*, IV, 183–185.



## MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ AND HER DAUGHTER

By Eva Marcu

NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

"The lady doth protest too much, methinks."

It is in the nature of letter writers to reveal much about themselves. And Madame de Sévigné, the letter writer *par excellence*, has left a trail so generously strewn with hints and clues that the impression of her personality has become quite precise and stable. And this in spite of the extraordinary reserve she demonstrated in speaking about herself.<sup>1</sup> It may be said that these letters are the most un-Rousseaulike, the most involuntary confessions imaginable.

Generations of readers have admired the Marquise's unusually flexible, communicative, tolerant, graceful and—above all—well-balanced nature. As to the daughter about whom we know so much less, whatever her qualities might have been, she most certainly lacked her mother's brilliance. Indeed, the fate of the correspondence itself suggests such a conclusion. We know with what great reluctance Pauline de Simiane went about the publication of her grandmother's correspondence. It is nevertheless to her that we owe the survival of most of the 1155 letters that we are now able to read. If Pauline de Simiane felt that posterity should not know the originals, she herself shrank from destroying them; this honor she bequeathed to her heir. But her own mother's part in the life-long correspondence apparently did not impress her as deserving publication.<sup>2</sup> She had no copy made of these, and burned the originals without leaving so much as a trace that might have helped posterity to follow the "dialogue" with greater ease. But this is only incidental evidence of the disparity in gifts between Madame de Grignan and her mother. The letters tell us much about shortcomings in the daughter, shortcomings that were clearly felt by both but at the same time assiduously wrapped in exaggerated praises on the part of the mother.

From first to last, in all of Madame de Sévigné's letters to her daughter—and only in those to her daughter—there is a strange note, entirely

1. An example of this classical restraint may be found in the way she expressed a personal recollection. She dates a letter thus: "Aux Rochers, mercredi 22e juillet, jour de la Madeleine, où fut tué, il y a quelques années, un père que j'avais." (I, 339). This was forty-four years after the event.

2. There is, nevertheless, a possibility that it was once her intention to bring out some of her mother's letters. For we read in a letter to her cousin, Celse de Bussy, "Si j'étais assez heureuse pour y pouvoir joindre les réponses de ma mère, ne seriez-vous pas bien content?" *RHL*, XXVII (1920), 4.

out of tune with the general manner. What motives can be said to lie behind the deviation from the Sévigné norm? How can we reconcile her celebrated mental equilibrium, her common sense and exceptional perspicacity, her capacity for irony and self-mockery, with the extravagant protestations of love sustained over twenty-five years, with the unending flatteries, with those rivers of tears we hear about in every letter, tears shed at the thought of the absent daughter? Not all readers, it is true, have been aware of this disturbing note in her general serenity. Some have, no doubt, been preoccupied with other aspects of the correspondence: the stories of the chronicler, the excellence of the style itself. Others may have been carried away by sheer sentimentality, moved to tears by so grandiose a mother-love. That most penetrating observer of human frailties, Marcel Proust, so attentive a reader of the letters, has nowhere taken exception to the direct declarations of love. And it was he who said in *A la recherche du temps perdu*: "C'est celui qui n'aime pas d'amour qui dit les choses tendres, l'amour ne s'exprimant pas directement" (Pléiade, III, 356).

Perhaps the very particular mother-child relationship in Proust's own family made the Sévigné-Grignan love more credible, as if his own ties had been, so to speak, prefigured in the seventeenth century. But, unlike such readers, there were those who sensed a dissonance, those who wondered at the unwonted turbulence that escaped from the letters. At first there was no sharp criticism, no attempt to explain the puzzle; the famous author, the glory of a glorious century, could have no flaws. The eighteenth-century critic, Jean-Baptiste Suard, for one, in his edition of the letters, is still infinitely respectful of the devoted mother. But, he admits in his preface, it must often have been wearisome, even exasperating for the daughter to read "les témoignages sans cesse prodigués." In the twentieth century, Daniel Mornet does not doubt in the least that Madame de Sévigné loved her daughter ardently. But he adds, "Elle se pique un peu au jeu de son amour [. . .] et [. . .] elle s'enchant elle-même du spectacle qu'elle donne."<sup>3</sup> Some thirty years later the tone was to change radically, and Maurice Rat, for instance, is positively outraged by all the incense lavished upon Madame de Sévigné, and by the heartless condemnation of her daughter, victim of "cette mère admirable et obsédante, qui, après l'avoir gâtée et pervertie, envahit son ménage et [. . .] trouve le moyen [. . .] de lui imposer son indiscrete, tenace et abusive présence." The daughter is, M. Rat continues, "trop et mal aimée par cette mère [. . .] cette gêneuse [. . .] cette mère encombrante et dévastatrice." His conclusion is simple: the viscous idolization is pure narcissism.<sup>4</sup> The evaluation

3. *Histoire de la littérature et de la pensée française* (Paris, 1924), p. 96.

4. "N'est-on pas sévère pour Madame de Grignan?" *Figaro Littéraire*, 22 mai 1954.

is somewhat harsh but it is refreshingly new and has much truth in it.

And then we have a still more advanced interpretation. The latest and perhaps best informed Sévignist, M. Gérard-Gailly, editor of the three-volume Pléiade edition of the correspondence, is in the forefront of those who see in the mother's outbursts of love proof of a Lesbian attachment. He cites as evidence the reproaches of her old friend from Port-Royal, the aged Arnauld-d'Andilly, who, in a conversation that lasted six hours, severely scolded her for making an idol of her daughter. M. Gérard-Gailly offers as added evidence the refusal of two priests to give her absolution, because of the same sin. And, to clinch the argument, there is that "all-revealing" phrase from one of the letters: "Pensez-vous que je ne baise point aussi de tout mon cœur vos belles joues et votre belle gorge?" (I, 253).<sup>5</sup>

Each of these points has been taken care of in a succinct, sensible and wholly convincing article by Marius-François Guyar, entitled "Faut-il damner Madame de Sévigné?"<sup>6</sup> He points out the obvious, namely that we know about the ecclesiastical chidings from the mother herself, who freely, gaily, even proudly tells her daughter how those saintly men dealt with her, who admits that she is less than a worthy Christian, too little occupied with God, too much concerned with that earthly creature, her daughter. And as for the outrageous sentence, M. Guyar puts it back into its context, where it quickly loses all scandalous significance, except, naturally, for the prejudiced reader. How could anyone, he asks, be so demented as to put under the son-in-law's very eyes proof of a guilty passion? For this particular letter, like many others, is addressed alternatively to Madame de Grignan and her husband. M. Guyar could have added another letter written a few years later, where, between two other bits of information, the same physiological features are mentioned with the same unconcern, and again in a sentence addressed to both. It reads: "Bonjour, Monsieur le comte de Grignan... Ma bonne, Madame de Montespan sait bien que son fils est chez les pauvres femmes. La belle gorge! C'est un blanc sein que vous avez envoyé à Paris" (II, 108). This concerns a portrait of Madame de Grignan which she had sent to Paris. And her mother not only admired what the painted décolleté revealed but made a pun on *sein* (*seeing*), too boot. There could be added the never questioned evidence that, throughout her correspondence with and

5. All references to the correspondence are to the three-volume Pléiade edition (1953-57).

6. *Etudes*, février 1954, pp. 194-202. The same sound view is taken by M. Henri Gaillard de Champris in an article entitled "Autour d'un procès intenté à la mémoire de Madame de Sévigné," *Revue des travaux de l'Académie des sciences morales et politiques*, 2ème semestre, 1949, pp. 94-108.

about many feminine friends, there is nowhere to be found a hysterical or pathological note.

It seems safer, then, to seek explanation for the temper of Madame de Sévigné's letters to her daughter on several levels. We shall have to untangle a skein of diverse agitations and, after having taken them apart, let them grow together again, as they lay helter-skelter—known to her or not—in the living person. There was in her, certainly, a fundamentally sympathetic feeling for, and easy communication with, people. It came naturally to her to make and keep friends—many friends. There was love for her children mingled with a parent's normal share of hopes and vanities. But we also detect an outspoken solicitude to uproot from her daughter a deep-seated feeling of insufficiency, and a burning desire to overcome an opposition in the only person who—with the possible exception of her own husband<sup>7</sup>—ever resisted her charm and wisdom. We also come upon a curious ambition to erect a *monumentum aere perennius* to a unique mother-daughter relationship, as well as an uncharted residuum of sadness. Lastly and importantly, a literary-artistic undercurrent which needed formulation and dramatization of emotions has to be taken into account.

The Marquise's sympathy for, and ease with, fleeting acquaintances and old friends, or, if we wish, her natural gift for conquering all around her, is easily discernible in the correspondence. No less clear is the uncomplicated relationship with her son. We mention the obvious only to rule out any suspicion of lack of feeling, motherly or otherwise, which might have caused difficulties with the daughter.

Yet when we read in one of the first letters following the separation, "Je ne veux pas que vous disiez que j'étais un rideau qui vous cachait" (I, 194), we understand that the daughter felt just this, and that we have surely come upon one of the roots of the complication.<sup>8</sup> How could the attractive girl not have been painfully paralyzed in society next to her magnetic mother? We know the drama of innumerable sons of famous fathers. Who looks at them, who wants to listen to them while the fascinating parent is present? Fathers, in general, make little effort to have their children forget their superiority, while Madame de Sévigné spent part of her life in praising and flattering her daughter's beauty, wit, intelligence, social graces and—letters. As far as beauty was concerned, she was simply "la plus belle fille de France." Examples in which her various

7. Tallemant des Réaux quotes her as having said: "M. de Sévigné m'estime et ne m'aime point, moi je l'aime et ne l'estime point" (*Historiettes* [Paris, Garnier], V, 315).

8. The "curtain" is also mentioned in R. Valléry-Radot, *Madame de Sévigné* (Paris, 1898), p. 147, and in Mme Saint-René Taillandier, *Madame de Sévigné et sa fille* (Paris, 1938), pp. 57-58. Both writers speak of the mother's exuberance and the price the daughter had to pay for having such a paragon for a mother, but they seem not to draw any conclusion from the invaluable sentence. M. Rat also draws attention to the "curtain," and with much relish!

endowments are extolled are so frequent that it is difficult to choose from the abundance. In one instance she writes:

Il revient ici de vois louanges, des panégyriques; vous avez un esprit si bon, si juste, si droit, qu'on vous fait seule arbitre des plus grands différends [...] Vous avez un sens si net, si fort au-dessus des autres, qu'on laisse le soin de votre personne, pour parler de votre esprit. (I, 289)

And in another letter:

A qui en avez-vous, ma bonne, de dire pire que pendre à votre esprit, si beau et si bon? Y a-t-il quelqu'un au monde qui soit plus éclairée et plus pénétrée de la raison et de vos devoirs? . . . vous savez bien ce que vous êtes au-dessus des autres; vous avez de la tête, du jugement, du discernement, de l'incertitude à force de lumières, de l'habileté, de l'insinuation, du dessein quand vous voulez, de la prudence, de la conduite, de la fermeté, de la présence d'esprit, de l'éloquence, et le don de vous faire aimer quand il vous plaît, et quelquefois plus et beaucoup plus que vous ne voudriez [...] mais pour tout dire en un mot, vous avez du fond pour être ce que vous voudrez. Il y a bien de gens à qui l'étoffe manque, qui voient à tout moment le bout de leur esprit; ma chère bonne, ne vous plaignez pas. (II, 735)

There would seem to be no need to have the daughter's distraught letter which brought about this reassuring list of perfections. Countless passages through the years repeat the loving reproach: you are wrong to be dissatisfied; you are ungrateful for your gifts. It is amusing to see also a rivalry in reverse between the two correspondents as to their style, each one deprecating her own sorry attempts and praising those of the other:

Jamais je n'ai vu une si brillante lettre que votre dernière; j'ai pensé vous la renvoyer pour vous donner le plaisir de la lire. (II, 245)

Je n'ai jamais vu de si aimables lettres que les vôtres . . . je viens d'en lire une qui me charme. Je vous ai ouï dire que j'avais une manière de tourner les moindres choses; vraiment [...] c'est bien vous qui l'avez; il y a 5 ou 6 endroits dans votre dernière qui sont d'un éclat et d'un agrément qui ouvre le cœur. (I, 671)

Vous prenez plaisir à me louer; si je vous avais écrit une aussi bonne lettre que votre dernière, sans aller plus loin, vous me mettriez au-dessus de nues. (II, 700)

Always watchful of the daughter's susceptibility, we see the mother slipping in a deferential, or merely consoling word: "Tous mes gens [sont] occupés à déménager, vos meubles sont portés *les premiers*" (I, 376). Or, after the detailed description of a brilliant reception in honor of the Princesse Tarante, in which she herself was something of the center of attention, she feels that she has dwelt long enough on her own success and so continues:

Cependant je vous ai vue dans votre petite Provence accompagnée d'autant de dames, et M. de Grignan suivi d'autant de gens de qualité, et reçu [...] aussi dignement que M. de Chaulnes [the governor of Brittany] le peut être ici. Je

fis réflexion que vous receviez là votre cour, et que je viens de faire ici la mienne. (II, 808)<sup>9</sup>

We are relieved to learn that Madame de Grignan receives her court, whereas the mother has to pay hers!

There are literally hundreds of instances where the consuming grief over the separation cannot be explained by rational causes. Madame de Sévigné was anything but old and lonely when her daughter left for Provence. Manifestly Madame de Grignan resisted the taxing fervor of her mother. And yet, this sensible woman who had her daughter's well-being uppermost in her mind, makes it a point to overpower her by showing in letter after letter, and more than once in each, her bleeding heart, her unparalleled veneration, her helplessness before the magnitude of the loss and the task of expressing her passion adequately. Her pleading to be loved in return, her humble or triumphant gratitude for a kind word—all this makes it quite clear that she was engaged in a battle for a resisting heart:<sup>10</sup>

Vous me dites des choses si extrêmement bonnes sur votre amitié pour moi, et à quel rang vous la mettez, qu'en vérité, ma bonne, je n'ose entreprendre de vous dire combien j'en suis touchée, et de joie, et de tendresse, et de reconnaissance; puisque vous croyez savoir combien je vous aime, vous les comprendrez aisément. (I, 774)

L'amitié que j'ai pour vous porte bien des peines et des amertumes avec elle; une absence continuelle avec la tendresse que j'ai pour vous, ne composent pas une paix bien profonde à un cœur aussi dénué de philosophie que le mien. (I, 789)

Croyez, ma bonne, qu'il n'est pas possible d'aimer quelqu'un comme je vous aime. Ne pensez pas que je puisse ni que je prétende vous dire à quel point vout m'êtes chère. (II, 19)

Il faut, ma chère bonne, que je me donne le plaisir de vous écrire, une fois pour toutes [...], comme je suis pour vous. Je n'ai pas l'esprit de vous le dire [...]; je ne vous dis rien qu'avec timidité et de mauvaise grâce [...]; tenez-vous donc à ceci. Je ne touche point au fond de la tendresse sensible et naturelle que j'ai pour vous; c'est un prodige. Je ne sais pas quel effet peut faire en vous l'opposition que vous dites qui est dans nos esprits; il faut qu'elle ne soit pas bien grande dans nos sentiments; ou qu'il y ait quelque chose d'extraordinaire pour moi, puisqu'il est vrai que mon attachement pour vous n'en est pas moindre. Il semble que je veuille vaincre ces obstacles, et que cela augmente mon amitié plutôt que de la diminuer: enfin, jamais, ce me semble, on ne peut aimer plus parfaitement. Je vous assure, ma bonne, que je ne suis occupée que

9. All italics in quotations are my own.

10. Who can say whether this advice she gives Madame de Grignan in order to reconcile an estranged woman companion is not precisely what she herself is constantly doing to draw the daughter nearer: "Que je la plains... Ne sauriez-vous parler ensemble? [...] Attaquez tout cela, moquez-vous-en, réchauffez un cœur glacé sous la jalousie [...] exercez votre pouvoir, rendez la paix à une pauvre personne, qui assurément n'est troublée que parce qu'elle vous aime" (III, 783-784).



de vous, ou par rapport à vous, ne disant et ne faisant rien que ce qui me paraît vous être le plus utile. (II, 408)

Later, after long years, the battle was partly won. Madame de Grignan had mellowed, had perhaps become resigned. Her many sicknesses, her financial disaster, her mother's indefatigable intervention on the Grignans' behalf must have helped to soften the antagonism. But the old habit, "à sa proie attachée," never ceases; there is no letter without complaint and a reminder of undying love, but the distress is now relegated to the past and so is felt less acutely:

Je ne sais, ma fille, comment vous pouvez dire que votre humeur est un nuage qui cache l'amitié que vous avez pour moi; *si cela était dans les temps passés, vous avez bien levé le voile depuis plusieurs années*, et vous ne me cachez rien de la plus parfaite et de la plus tendre amitié qui fut jamais. (III, 226)

En vérité, ma fille, on perd infiniment, quand on vous perd: jamais personne n'a jeté des charmes dans l'amitié comme vous faites [. . .] M. de la Garde m'en avait parlé autrefois de cette manière, et j'avais cru, *dans certaines occasions, que vous me cachiez cruellement tous ces trésors*; mais, *ma chère enfant, vous me les avez découverts*; je connais votre cœur tout parfait, tout plein de tendresse et d'amitié pour moi; c'est une consolation dans la fin de ma vie, qui me rendrait heureuse sans votre absence. (III, 236)

And still much later, an epistle ends as follows: "Je ne vous répéterai point ennuyeusement tout ce que je suis pour vous [= what my feelings for you are]. Si vous m'aimez, comme je le crois, je suis trop bien payée" (III, 860). She does not wish to repeat herself, but she does; she hopes, almost believes, that her daughter loves her; and if it were true she would be happy. The wooing had become an obsession.

Was it part of the wooing, or was it from another corner of her mind and heart that sprang the colossal effort to prove to Madame de Grignan, to herself, perhaps to the world at large how incomparable the attachment was? We read, for example:

Je ne crois pas qu'il se soit jamais vu un commerce comme le nôtre [. . .] c'est ce qui ne se voit guère, et c'est ce que je sens délicieusement. (I, 670)

Il est vrai que jamais une fille n'a tant aimé sa maman, j'en suis honteuse, et j'ai peur que vous ne le soyez; mais si j'osais le dire, je crois me distinguer aussi dans l'amour maternelle. (III, 375)

Il n'y a que vous, ma bonne, et moi, si je l'ose dire, qui la [l'amitié] mettons au premier rang, et qui en soyons plus touchées que de toutes les autres choses du monde. Ces sentiments sont rares, on voit tous les jours des arrangements bien contraires; mais jouissons du plaisir de n'être pas comme les autres. (III, 695)

Such a marvel of love—sustained by the most regular correspondence—might have left room for regret at being separated, but it will never explain the irrational threnodies during separations which actually lasted no longer than the mutual visits of mother and daughter. For her own



part, Madame de Grignan tried valiantly—at least from a distance—to appease and praise and reassure the unreasonable mother. The despairing note must have deeper causes, some sadness she preferred not to speak about. Here again we have to remember the truly “classic” modesty which she showed in all other questions of her personal life. It is futile to speculate on what we do not know; some anxiety or disappointment simply must be at the bottom of such a disproportion between the “harm” inflicted and the “suffering” expressed. Unavowed causes of strong emotions are not new to our time. In Homer we read this memorable example: When the women in Achilles’ tent cried for Patroklos, and when Briseis had said farewell to the dead friend, the poet explains: “So she spoke, lamenting, and the women sorrowed around her / Grieving openly for Patroklos, but for her own sorrows/ each” (*Iliad*, XIX, 301–302).<sup>11</sup>

There are always reasons enough to darken the happiest soul. Several events in Madame de Sévigné’s life would account for less than glowing satisfaction on her part. There is the early death of her parents,<sup>12</sup> the undignified end of her marriage—Henri de Sévigné died in a duel fought for another woman after six years of matrimony—and the later details we have from her own hand: the daughter’s poor health, and, as it seemed to the mother, her all too numerous pregnancies; the upbringing of the grandchildren, of which she often disapproved; the waste and foreseeable disaster at Grignan. There was the son’s difficulty in finding a secure footing in life; there was sickness and death around her, and the approach of her own old age which, here and there, she so movingly mentions. She was also sufficiently acquainted with injustice in higher spheres: the notorious “Affaire des poisons,” cruel suppression of rebellion in the provinces, the ravages of war. But all this was to come later, while the frantic tone is there from the beginning; and so there must be other, earlier causes. It would seem that the little we know—and some things we do not know—were channeled into the open lament for Patroklos, that is into the despair of being separated from her beloved child.

Her solicitude for the daughter’s sensibility, her compulsion to overcome the unwonted resistance—this thorn in her side—her pride in a privileged attachment, largely a fiction, and perhaps some concealed distress, would be sufficient motives to account for a feverish strain in an average person. But in the case of Sévigné there is a lingering suspicion that part of the exaltation might be no more than “literature.”

11. Richmond Lattimore’s translation. Does she not express the same transference of feelings when she writes, “C’est notre intérêt qui nous fait pleurer, quand nous croyons pleurer le malheur des autres” (III, 687–88)?

12. Although we readily accept M. Gérard-Gailly’s convincing demonstration of *L’Enfance et la jeunesse heureuse de Mme de Sévigné* (Paris, 1926). Cf. also n. 1, above.

Undoubtedly she simply "followed her pen," as she often asserts. But the almost three-thousand published pages we possess, though far from the whole output, demonstrate in her an urge to write that would be remarkable even if the results had not been so good. She has been praised enough for her capacity to describe situations which she herself had not seen. Is it not this power to imagine, and to steady a fleeting impression, to heighten a feeling or an event, the satisfaction of arranging a phrase, of sidetracking the expected, and of finding a cadence, which makes the writer?<sup>13</sup> If all poets are "liars," and since one lies best on a small foundation of truth, could not Madame de Sévigné's fantasy have overflowed at certain points, could not reality have lost its contours, could not a pleasure in dramatization, in eloquence, have taken over? How else are we to understand this opening sentence of a letter: "Quel jour, ma fille, que celui qui ouvre l'absence!" (I, 72). Unpremeditated? Most likely, but the literary "nerve" vibrated and worked sadness into the sober solemnity of some classical tragedy. Here would also belong the apparently uncontrolled letter—without a grammatical flaw—to D'Hacqueville, which begins in the following manner:

Je vous écris avec un serrement de cœur qui me tue; je suis incapable d'écrire à d'autres qu'à vous, parce qu'il n'y a que vous qui ayez la bonté d'entrer dans mes extrêmes tendresses. Enfin, voilà le second ordinaire que je ne reçois pas de nouvelles de ma fille: je tremble depuis la tête jusqu'aux pieds, je n'ai pas l'usage de raison, je ne dors point; et si je dors, je me réveille avec des sursauts qui sont pires que de ne pas dormir [...] Ma fille ne m'écrit-elle plus? Est-elle malade? Me prend-on mes lettres? [...] Ah! mon Dieu, que je suis malheureuse de n'avoir personne avec qui pleurer! (I, 310-11)

The slipping from true emotion into literature is still clearer in this magnificent passage:

Je fus hier au Buron, j'en revins le soir; je pensai pleurer en voyant la dégradation de cette terre: Il y avait les plus vieux arbres du monde; mon fils dans son dernier voyage lui a donné les derniers coups de cognée . . . il n'a aucune fantaisie, mais sa main est un creuset qui fond l'argent. Ma bonne, il faut que vous essuyiez tout ceci. Toutes ces dryades affligées que je vis hier, tous ces vieux sylvains qui ne savent plus où se retirer. Tous ces anciens corbeaux établis depuis deux cents ans dans l'horreur de ces bois, ces chouettes qui, dans cette obscurité, annonçaient, par leur funestes cris, les malheurs de tous les hommes; tout cela me fit hier des plaintes qui me touchèrent sensiblement le cœur; et que sait-on même si plusieurs de ces vieux chênes n'ont point parlé, comme celui où était Clorinde? Ce lieu était un *luogo d'incanto*. (II, 720)

And elsewhere, the same "staging" of a small fact. Rheumatism had

13. Goethe called it his pleasure in fabulations ("die Lust zu Fabulieren"). It is this trait that Thornton Wilder sensed in patterning his Marquesa de Montemayor after her in *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*.

paralyzed her hands for months. Now she was beginning to write again:

Il me semble que je n'écris pas trop mal [...] du moins je vous répons des premières lignes; car vous saurez, ma chère fille, que mes mains, c'est-à-dire, ma main droite ne veut entendre encore en nulle proposition qu'à celle de vous écrire: je l'en aime mieux. On lui présente une cuiller, point de nouvelle; elle tremblote et renverse tout; on lui demande encore certaines choses, elle refuse à plat, et croit que je lui suis encore trop obligée. Il est vrai que je ne lui demande plus rien! (II, 73)

And this last fancy, when she is on the point of moving to the Car-navalet:

Adieu, ma bonne; adieu, mes chers Grignans et Grignanes; je vous aime et vous honore; aimez-moi un peu. On m'ôte mon écritoire, mon papier, ma table, mon siège. Oh! démenage tant que tu voudras, me voilà debout. (II, 380)

It is only fair to conclude on these sprightly examples, for they constitute the prevailing note in the letters. If there is a melancholic strain in them,<sup>14</sup> we should not make a tragic Mother-figure out of her. The daughter may indeed have brought problems into her life, but she became the stimulus for her mother's emotions and served as a repository and medium for her literary gifts.<sup>15</sup> The lamentations and protestations are one element only of the Thousand and one Tales that are her letters. The shrill and repetitious declamations are not their most appealing aspect; indeed they might be called the heroine's tragic flaw. The lady does protest too much. But exaltation, too, lay at the source of the writer's most astonishing performances.

14. Professor Jasinski observes: "Sous la gaieté la plus enjouée, elle laisse percevoir de pénétrantes mélancolies, et la fermeté raisonnable de son siècle se tempère en elle d'inquiétudes à l'approche de l'âge, de la maladie et de la mort" (*Histoire de la littérature française* [Paris, 1947], I, 398).

15. Writing letters was a compulsive occupation for her: "Je commence ma lettre avant que la vôtre soit arrivée..." (III, 424); and "C'est [receiving your letters] tellement la substance nécessaire de mon cœur et de mon esprit, que je languis quand elle me manque" (III, 429).

## L'INTELLIGENCE DES JUIFS CHEZ MAURICE BARRÈS

Par Pierre Aubery

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AU MOIS de mai 1898, Maurice Barrès posait sa candidature aux élections législatives dans la circonscription de Nancy. On était en pleine affaire Dreyfus. Aussi ne s'étonnera-t-on pas trop que des trois mots qui résumaient son programme: antisémitisme, socialisme, nationalisme, *antisémitisme* fût le premier. Ce qui frappe le lecteur qui compulse aujourd'hui ces vieux papiers c'est moins la violence et le caractère sommaire de l'argumentation de Barrès que son manque d'originalité. Il concluait en effet sa profession de foi, comme n'importe quel médiocre chauvin, en réclamant l'application d'un strict *numerus clausus* ainsi qu'une sévère limitation des naturalisations.<sup>1</sup>

Ce n'était donc que cela, serait-on tenté de se dire, le prince de la jeunesse, le prestigieux magicien des cadences françaises dont il suffit de prononcer le nom pour voir, aux alentours du quai Conti, se mouiller tant de paupières académiques. Pourtant il serait injuste de vouloir juger Barrès, même le Barrès antisémite, sur la seule foi des pages de littérature électorale qu'il a commises. C'est dans ses œuvres achevées et pas ailleurs qu'il faut aller chercher sa pensée la plus authentique.

Pour un Barrès, surtout au temps de l'affaire Dreyfus, les écrits sont des actes bien plus que des jeux gratuits de l'esprit. Encore faut-il choisir, pour définir son antisémitisme, parmi les textes fort nombreux dans lesquels s'expriment ses idées sur les Juifs. Dépouillerons-nous *Mes Cahiers*, qui dispersent en quatorze volumes les notes de travail et les souvenirs de notre auteur? Ou bien irons-nous chercher des renseignements sur la conception que se faisait Barrès de la personnalité et du rôle des Juifs dans *Scènes et doctrines du nationalisme* dont les deux volumes ne sont, à vrai dire, qu'un recueil d'articles de combat? Non, car nous croyons, avec André Gide que "les mémoires ne sont qu'à demi-sincères, si grand que soit leur souci de vérité . . . et que . . . peut-être approche-t-on de plus près à la vérité dans le roman."<sup>2</sup> Nous tenterons donc de découvrir, en analysant quelques uns de ses romans où passent des personnages d'origine israélite, la vision qu'avait Barrès de l'homme juif de son temps. Le portrait que nous tenterons d'en dégager et la place que tiennent les Juifs dans l'univers barrésien nous renseigneront mieux

1. *Scènes et doctrines du nationalisme* [1902] (Plon, 1925) II, p. 161.

2. *Si le grain ne meurt*, Œuvres complètes, X, 341.

que les diatribes anti-dreyfusardes qu'il publia dans la presse jusqu'en 1914 sur le caractère de son antisémitisme.

Notre intention n'est donc pas de présenter une sorte d'anthologie des déclarations de Barrès concernant les Juifs. Qu'on nous permette seulement de rappeler brièvement qu'il a repris, avec tout le relief que leur prête son grand talent, la plupart des thèmes antisémites de Drumont, à qui d'ailleurs il a dédié *Leurs Figures*. Nous n'en donnerons qu'un exemple. Lors du procès de Rennes, après le suicide du colonel Henry, à un moment où les "preuves" de la culpabilité de Dreyfus s'évanouissaient l'une après l'autre, Barrès affirmait froidement: "Que Dreyfus est capable de trahir, je le conclus de sa race."<sup>3</sup>

Mais à quoi bon exhumer ces anciennes polémiques? Nous les laissons volontiers sombrer dans l'oubli s'il ne s'opérait aujourd'hui en France, dans les milieux conservateurs, un très net et croyons-nous très significatif retour à Barrès. Pierre de Boisdeffre, le propre petit-fils du chef d'état-major général de l'armée au temps de l'affaire Dreyfus, semble en avoir donné le signal il y a quelques années en publiant un *Barrès parmi nous*. (chez Amiot-Dumont en 1952). La revue *La Table Ronde* a suivi le mouvement en consacrant son numéro de mars 1957 à Barrès. Depuis, les articles sur Barrès se sont multipliés à l'occasion de la parution du XIX<sup>e</sup> et dernier tome de *Mes Cahiers* ainsi que de quelques inédits du Maître.

D'autre part ne peut-on pas affirmer qu'au cours de l'été 1958 la sensibilité, sinon l'idéologie nationaliste, de Barrès est arrivée au pouvoir en France? Dans une étude, parue dans le numéro de *La Table Ronde* déjà cité, Pol Vandromme notait que l'on a souvent cru voir dans le général de Gaulle l'héritier spirituel de Barrès. Il ne serait pas difficile, en effet, de relever dans les œuvres complètes du général-Président un certain nombre de couplets barrésiens. Qu'on relise par exemple, l'invocation à la France qui ouvre le premier volume des *Mémoires de Guerre* et qu'on la compare aux pages les plus célèbres de *La Colline inspirée*. On ne manquera pas de relever bien des similitudes de ton et d'inspiration. Pol Vandromme remarquait également que "l'effort" de la nouvelle droite, celle des continuateurs de Maurras, les Boutang, les Massis, etc., lui semblait authentiquement barrésien. Or, à bien des égards, cet "effort" rejoint celui de cet autre barrésien notoire qu'est André Malraux et de ses amis de la majorité gouvernementale.

L'heure nous a donc paru propice pour tenter de comprendre la nature des courants idéologiques et des réflexes antisémites de la droite nationaliste dont Barrès nous a donné naguère la théorie.

Bien qu'il n'en soient pas tout à fait absents les Juifs ne tiennent guère

3. *Scènes et doctrines*, I, 161, 167.

de place dans les écrits de jeunesse de Barrès. Il faut attendre *Les Déracinés* (1897) pour les voir faire leur entrée sur la scène de son œuvre. Et encore n'y apparaissent-ils qu'en trompe-l'œil, comme sur une sorte de toile de fond destinée à mettre en relief certains épisodes de l'action et les caractères distinctifs des personnages principaux. Les silhouettes de Juifs qui surgissent çà et là, au fil de l'intrigue, restent des entités très souvent sans visage et sans voix, presque toujours observées de l'extérieur. L'auteur ne fait guère effort pour comprendre et pour expliquer objectivement ce qui peut bien se passer dans leur esprit et dans leur cœur. Les pages qu'il leur consacre ne nous renseignent guère sur la personne et la situation concrète des Juifs vivant en France à la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Parfois même avons-nous quelque peine à nous convaincre que Barrès nous parle là d'israélites, c'est-à-dire des héritiers avoués d'une certaine tradition religieuse qui en ont gardé des croyances, des traits de mœurs, des comportements originaux, sinon toute une philosophie de l'existence et non point d'individus quelconques. Les personnages juifs dans les romans de Barrès représentent bien moins, en effet, les Juifs réels qu'il a connus, qu'il a observés à Nancy dans sa jeunesse, que le mythe du Juif, cette société secrète d'hommes extraordinaires à laquelle il prête une homogénéité, une cohésion sans défaut et de longs desseins.

Un passage des *Déracinés*, mi-description, mi-méditation, très caractéristique en cela de l'esthétique barrésienne, ramasse en une brève mais dense synthèse l'essentiel des impressions, des préjugés et des idées de Barrès sur les Juifs.

Au retour d'un bref séjour dans sa Lorraine natale, un jeune lettré sensible écrit un article qui invite les "Français-type" à se rallier pour recréer, fortifier l'intégrité psychologique de la France. Il s'est en effet rendu compte, dans sa province, qu'on n'y trouve plus guère de gens du cru. Seules y demeurent quelques vieilles femmes qui témoignent de l'existence d'une très ancienne tradition locale. Elles représentent un ancien mode de vie, une façon de sentir les choses, qu'elles sont bien impuissantes d'ailleurs à maintenir et plus encore à revitaliser. A Neufchâteau "l'âme locale" s'évanouit lentement devant le dynamisme des étrangers, Allemands et Juifs. C'est ainsi, remarque-t-il, que dans tout l'Est de la France ces races se substituent à l'autchtone.

François Sturel, dont on s'accorde généralement pour faire le porte-parole préféré de Barrès dans le roman de l'énergie nationale, "passant quelques jours à Neufchâteau, de sa fenêtre du rez-de-chaussée apercevait des juifs arrivés de cet hiver et qui avaient loué la maison d'en face: ils reconduisaient des visiteurs jusque dans la rue. C'était peut-être la dixième fois depuis le matin; et toujours des personnes que Sturel, né dans cette ville, ne connaissait pas."<sup>4</sup>

4. *Les Déracinés* [1897] (Plon, 1954) II, 70.



En lisant ces lignes on s'imagine Sturel, tel quelque bourgeoise oisive et médisante, soulevant le coin de son rideau pour épier les allées et venues de ses voisins. On entend aussi ses aigres remarques sur ces Juifs "arrivés de cet hiver" qui ont eu l'audace de louer la maison d'en face. Quel scandale en effet, pour un Sturel, de voir que, parce qu'ils en avaient les moyens, des Juifs aient pu s'installer en intrus dans un quartier bourgeois, au milieu des meilleures familles de l'endroit. Pourtant ils n'y connaissent personne. Ils n'y sont pas reçus et, pis encore, peut-être n'ont-ils même pas cherché à l'être. Tous leurs visiteurs, et ils sont nombreux, sont des inconnus, des étrangers sans doute.

On peut trouver une explication aux réactions de Sturel dans *L'Appel au Soldat* (1900) où ce même personnage constate que tout l'Est de la France, et en particulier la vallée de la Moselle, devient une "rue des candidats à la nationalité française." Toutes sortes d'allogènes par cette voie largement ouverte se précipitent "sur la France comme la pauvreté sur le monde: . . . recouvrant les vieilles populations, puis leur flot . . . va se perdre plus avant dans la collectivité française."<sup>5</sup> Au lieu de se réjouir de l'attrait que la France exerce sur tant d'étrangers et de l'apport qu'ils représentent, Sturel déplore que de tels mouvements de population soient tolérés. Le narrateur lui souffle que "la France débilite n'a plus l'énergie de faire de la matière française avec les éléments étrangers" et ajoute "ces vagabonds nous transforment à leur ressemblance."<sup>6</sup> Si l'on en croit Barrès rien ne peut sortir de bon de ces greffes trop hâtives de rameaux étrangers sur le tronc national. Ils contiennent des poisons pour l'organisme français, parce qu'étrangers, et ils épuisent sa sève sans la renouveler.

Dissimulé derrière son carreau Sturel observe encore que "Chez le père et la mère étaient venus se loger le fils et la bru. Le dernier dialogue sur le trottoir, à chaque visite, — on le devinait aux gestes, aux physionomies, — c'étaient des compliments sur la naissance d'un enfant survenu le mois d'avant. Et, de voir les quatre Juifs recevant ces amabilités, parlant eux-mêmes de leur fils et petit-fils avec amour, c'était un spectacle beau et touchant, oui, un spectacle d'une animalité émouvante . . . On sentait que ces gens-là eussent été magnifiques dans leur ghetto de Francfort, prolifiques et préparant des humiliés et des vainqueurs du monde."

Faut-il vraiment vouloir trouver là des indications précises sur le comportement des Juifs dans ce qu'il a d'étranger aux mœurs françaises? "Le dernier dialogue sur le trottoir" de même que "les gestes et l'expression des physionomies" voilà certes des choses qui évoquent le monde méditerranéen, l'orient même, plutôt que la réserve des Français de l'Est.

5. *L'Appel au soldat* [1900] (Emile-Paul, 1911), p. 307.

6. *Les déracinés*, II, 72, 73.

Sturel concède cependant qu'il y a quelque chose d'émouvant dans le fort sentiment familial qu'expriment ces circonstances et ces attitudes. Ailleurs Barrès reconnaît au baron Jacques de Reinach, l'un des personnages centraux du scandale de Panama dont il trace au demeurant un si noir portrait "des entrailles humaines, familiales."<sup>7</sup> Mais ne nous y laissons pas prendre, l'hommage rendu par Sturel aux vertus familiales des Juifs implique en réalité de sévères critiques. C'est, dit-il, "un spectacle d'une animalité émouvante" que de voir leur amour des enfants. Or, Barrès nous avertissait dans *Un Homme libre* (1889) que "celui qui se laisse empoigner par ses instincts naturels est perdu. Il redevient inconscient; il perd la clairvoyance, tout au moins la libre direction de son mécanisme."<sup>8</sup> En se laissant guider par l'instinct, en se reproduisant sans mesure, les Juifs risquent de détruire le difficile équilibre démographique auquel la France était parvenue. Il y a un reproche et une nostalgie dans cet adjectif "prolifique" que Sturel applique à ses voisins juifs. Prolifiques, cela évoque l'insouciance et la veulerie des races ou des classes sociales encore primitives qui font des enfants sans se préoccuper de ce qu'il adviendra d'eux. Prolifiques c'est également le signe d'une surabondance de vie, d'une énergie qui a déserté depuis longtemps les vieux peuples fatigués. La remarque que Barrès prête à Sturel sur le ghetto de Francfort, où ces gens-là eussent été magnifiques au milieu de leurs enfants, est lourde d'une ironie peut-être involontaire. Il se trouve en effet que jadis beaucoup de Juifs fuyaient le ghetto de Francfort précisément pour créer un foyer. Les règlements locaux limitaient strictement le nombre des mariages juifs. Les fiancés devaient attendre des années avant d'être autorisés à se marier. La vie étroite et resserrée, que le statut particulier qui leur était appliqué préparait aux Juifs, n'encourageait guère la fécondité. Graetz, dans son *Histoire des Juifs*<sup>9</sup> note que le contrôle des mariages juifs fut particulièrement sévère à Francfort pendant les années de réaction qui suivirent la chute de Napoléon I<sup>er</sup>. Nous avons recueilli en outre un témoignage de la bouche même de Paul Grünebaum-Ballin, ancien conseiller d'Etat, qui fut le collaborateur d'Aristide Briand et de Léon Blum, confirmant ce fait. Son propre grand-père dut attendre sept ans, vers 1828, avant d'obtenir l'autorisation de se marier à Francfort.

Le spectacle de ces "nomades juifs" installés dans sa petite ville fait naître chez Sturel des impressions qui se développent en réflexions. A les voir vivre ainsi note Barrès rapportant et commentant le point de vue de Sturel, il "restait que, ruisselant d'une certaine intelligence, ils étaient

7. *Leurs Figures* [1902] (Emile-Paul, 1917), p. 105.

8. *Un Homme libre* [1889] (Emile-Paul, 1912), p. 235.

9. Graetz, *History of the Jews* (Philadelphia, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1895), V, 520.

laid tout de même, avec leur mimique étrangère, sous le porche d'une vieille maison de Neufchâteau. Sturel, tout imbu des idées que, petit garçon, il avait prises au collège de Neufchâteau, mais sans nulle animosité, se sentit, à les regarder envahi de tristesse: "avec ceux-là, comment avoir un lien? Comment me trouver avec eux en communauté de sentiments?..."<sup>10</sup>

Dans l'ambiance de cette petite ville de l'Est les Juifs étaient laids. Non pas d'une laideur intrinsèque, absolue, mais aux yeux de Sturel, d'une laideur circonstancielle. Leurs traits, leurs attitudes, leurs mimiques détonnaient dans le cadre ancien où ils évoluaient. Différents, exotiques, ils ne l'étaient pas seulement par leur physique mais par tout leur être moral avec lequel Sturel ne se sentait rien de commun, aucun point de contact.

Le sentiment de Sturel s'explique si l'on se souvient que, pour Barrès, fidèle en cela à l'enseignement de ses maîtres positivistes de Saint-Simon à Taine "un nationaliste, c'est un Français qui a pris conscience de sa formation. Nationalisme est acceptation d'un déterminisme."<sup>11</sup> Plus encore même il affirme que le *Moi* soumis à l'analyse un peu sérieusement s'anéantit et ne laisse que la société dont il est l'éphémère produit. "Nous ne sommes pas maîtres des pensées qui naissent en nous... Elles sont des façons de réagir où se traduisent de très anciennes dispositions physiologiques. Selon le milieu où nous sommes plongés, nous élaborons des jugements et des raisonnements... Il n'y a pas d'idées personnelles, les idées mêmes les plus rares, les jugements même les plus abstraits... sont des façons de sentir générales et apparaissent nécessairement chez tous les êtres de même organisme assiéés par les mêmes images."<sup>12</sup>

Cette page des *Scènes et Doctrines* ne nous invite-t-elle pas à penser que chez un Lorrain comme Sturel, la méfiance, le peu de goût pour les Juifs, l'antisémitisme pour tout dire, ne serait rien d'autre qu'une sorte de réflexe conditionné? Puisque toute son intelligence, toute sa sensibilité, sont déterminées par la race dont il est issu et le milieu dans lequel il s'est formé, Sturel ne peut espérer ni communier ni même vraiment communiquer avec des hommes d'une physiologie et d'une tradition différentes des siennes. De là un pénible sentiment de séparation. Et pourtant, à certains égards, Sturel est tenté de se sentir plus proche de ces Juifs de passage, qui partagent quelques-unes de ses préoccupations intellectuelles, que des siens. Le paradoxe de ses propres réactions lui inspire de mélancoliques réflexions. "Moins instruits que ces nomades, moins liseurs de journaux, moins renseignés sur Paris, les bourgeois de Neufchâteau, qui sont en train de périr, submergés sous leurs bandes,

10. *Les Déracinés*, II, 71.

11. *Scènes et doctrines*, I, 10.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

avaient une façon de sentir la vie, de goûter le pittoresque, de s'indigner et de s'attendrir, enfin, qui faisaient qu'avec eux je m'accordais et je profitais. Nous avions, ce qui ne s'analyse pas, une tradition commune: elle nous avait fait une même conscience..."<sup>13</sup>

La tendresse de Sturel pour les siens, c'est un peu celle d'un père pour le moins doué de ses enfants. De là aussi sa tristesse en face des Juifs dont il doit bien admettre qu'ils sont plus instruits, mieux informés et, en un mot plus intelligents.

Le héros barrésien ne se laisse pas longtemps accabler par l'intuition qu'il a d'une certaine supériorité intellectuelle des Juifs. Parce qu'affectif et déterministe, il incline à disqualifier l'intelligence, "cette petite chose à la surface de nous-mêmes,"<sup>14</sup> comme un piètre instrument de connaissance et un bien médiocre guide dans les labyrinthes où la vie nous entraîne. Plus que de toute autre il se méfie de l'intelligence des Juifs, qui selon l'André Maltère de *L'Ennemi des Lois* (1893), "manient les idées du même pouce qu'un banquier les valeurs." Ce même personnage nous offre une explication de la merveilleuse efficacité de l'intelligence juive. Elle fonctionne, croit-il, dans une sorte de vide abstrait, ce qui lui permet d'échapper totalement à l'influence perturbatrice de la sensibilité. "L'avantage, c'est que leur jugement reste fort net, sans cette buée que l'enthousiasme met sur la clairvoyance de tant de penseurs. Le Juif ne s'attache à aucune façon de voir; il n'est que plus habile à les classer toutes... Le Juif est un logicien incomparable. Ses raisonnements sont nets, impersonnels comme un compte en banque."<sup>15</sup>

On croirait entendre formuler, avec toutefois une sécheresse trop catégorique l'idéal même que Benda a poursuivi tout au long de son existence. Son souci d'être un clerc qui ne trahit pas, de séparer les valeurs intellectuelles des valeurs morales, semblerait corroborer l'analyse barrésienne. Mais Benda est bien peu représentatif de la pensée juive traditionnelle qu'il ne connaissait guère comme il se plaisait, non sans coquetterie, à le dire.<sup>16</sup> Le caractère partisan, polémique de la thèse barrésienne apparaît d'ailleurs fort nettement lorsqu'il s'en sert pour expliquer l'orientation que les doctrinaires juifs donnèrent aux théories socialistes. Barrès affirme en effet que "des formules où ils serraient tout ce qui milite pour le socialisme, les durs logiciens juifs crurent devoir éliminer les notions de pitié, de justice, d'enthousiasme."<sup>17</sup> En réalité toute l'histoire du messianisme juif témoigne contre cette affirmation. S'il est une notion chère aux Juifs qui l'ont conçue et si souvent tra-

13. *Les Déracinés*, II, 71.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

15. *L'Ennemi des lois* [1893] (Plon, 1927), p. 147.

16. Benda, *La jeunesse d'un clerc* (Gallimard, 1936), p. 47.

17. *L'Ennemi des lois*, p. 148.

duite en actes, c'est bien celle du *Tzédek*,<sup>18</sup> la Justice-Charité, unité indissoluble qui refuse de se laisser dissocier par souci d'efficacité. Sur le plan politique on a pu voir en France, de l'affaire Dreyfus au Front Populaire, que ces "durs logiciens juifs" comptaient précisément au nombre de ceux qui s'efforçaient d'introduire toujours plus de justice, plus de fraternité, plus de chaleureuse humanité dans la vie sociale.

Ainsi, tantôt sous prétexte qu'ils demeurent trop livrés à l'instinct, tantôt sous prétexte qu'il ne sont que des raisonneurs glacés et sans entrailles, Barrès rejette les Juifs du jardin secret où s'enferme sa famille d'esprit. Il s'affirme en les niant. Quelques uns de ses personnages reçoivent la révélation de leur vrai *Moi*, des aspects de leur personnalité qu'ils tiennent le plus à cultiver, du contact des Juifs dont les attitudes provoquent chez eux une violente réaction. Ce qui, par exemple, persuade Sturel de ne pas rompre les derniers liens qui le rattachent encore à la Lorraine, c'est le spectacle des Juifs installés à Neufchâteau. Or, il ne sait rien de précis de ces Juifs, vagues silhouettes observées de loin. Mais leurs faits et gestes froissent sa sensibilité. Ils symbolisent à ses yeux l'étranger, le barbare dont la seule présence transforme le climat particulier de son terroir. La Lorraine colonisée par les Juifs, la France envahie par eux, peuvent subsister en tant que province, en tant que nation, mais elles cessent dès lors d'être fidèles à leur passé. L'air y devient irrespirable pour les vieux Français. Car, selon Barrès, "... il faut que la France demeure liée de génération en génération, il faut qu'elle demeure la même dans son essence, pour que nous, individus, nous trouvions le bonheur..."<sup>19</sup>

Cet aveu d'attachement au passé ne laisse pas d'avoir quelque chose d'émouvant mais ne trahit-il pas aussi ce manque de vitalité, cette incapacité d'assimiler les nouveautés et les nouveaux venus, dont on entend tant d'échos dans l'œuvre de Barrès? La fidélité à la terre et aux morts ne serait-elle qu'une forme d'impuissance, que l'expression de cette haine de la vie que Barrès confesse dans *Mes Cahiers*?<sup>20</sup> Jaurès le présentait qui écrivit un jour: "Nous aussi, nous avons le culte du passé. Mais la vraie manière de l'honorer et de le respecter, ce n'est pas de se tourner vers les siècles éteints pour contempler une longue chaîne de fantômes. ... C'est nous qui sommes les vrais héritiers du foyer des aïeux: nous avons pris la flamme, vous [Barrès] n'en avez gardé que la cendre."<sup>21</sup>

En lisant Barrès on ne peut s'empêcher de se demander comment il a réussi à se persuader qu'une poignée de Juifs pourraient faire perdre son âme à un vieux peuple cultivé et nombreux comme celui de France. C'est que, comme beaucoup d'antisémites, il ne considère pas les Juifs

18. Aubery, *Milieux juifs de la France contemporaine* (Plon, 1957), pp. 215, 264, 288.

19. *Scènes et doctrines*, I, 132.

20. *Mes Cahiers* (Plon, 1929), I, 114.

21. "Discours au Panthéon," v. *L'Actualité de l'histoire*, décembre 1956, no. 17, p. 3.

d'un regard objectif. Il leur prête une totale unité de vues et d'action—une parfaite logique dans l'exécution de plans longuement mûris, une intelligence sans faiblesse. En face d'eux il nous montre une France "dissociée et décérébrée," une France affaiblie par le vieillissement de sa population, l'insuffisance de sa natalité, une France énermée par les querelles que suscite la démocratie et dont la conscience nationale s'est évanouie sous l'influence du pseudo-universalisme que propose le rationalisme kantien devenu philosophie officielle de l'université.

Les observations de Barrès nous montrant les Juifs maniant les idées du même pouce qu'un banquier les valeurs, jamais distraits de leurs impeccables raisonnements par les élans du cœur, tendent à les définir comme de véritables incarnations de l'esprit pur. Or, qu'est-ce que l'esprit pur, enfermé sur soi-même et ses seules préoccupations, sinon le diable lui-même? Au moyen-âge déjà on pourchassait les Juifs comme agents du malin.

Dans l'œuvre de Barrès, les Juifs apparaissent également comme des orientaux. Or, l'Orient a été l'une des passions de notre auteur, une tentation toujours combattue, jamais totalement repoussée. Il voyait dans l'Orient le triomphe du rêve et de l'imagination, l'abandon à de molles et infinies voluptés. Et cet Orient romantique lui semblait bien plus dangereux lorsqu'il le rencontrait en Lorraine, dans la personne des Juifs ou bien à Paris sous les traits de la mystérieuse Astiné Aravian, que lorsqu'il partait à sa rencontre sur les rives de la Méditerranée.

Le respect de l'intelligence pure, qui transparait à travers les plus cruelles invectives que Barrès adressait aux "intellectuels" au temps de l'affaire Dreyfus, la nostalgie de l'Orient, contre-partie de son culte de l'énergie, voilà sans doute ce qui a incité Barrès à donner une telle place aux Juifs dans son univers romanesque. Le sentiment qu'il nourrissait à leur égard nous semble avoir bien des traits de l'amour refoulé.

On ne peut s'empêcher d'éprouver quelque surprise cependant, en constatant qu'une âme artiste comme celle de Barrès ait pu se laisser émouvoir par une passion aussi vulgaire que l'antisémitisme. Peut-être, comme beaucoup d'esthètes maladifs et nerveux, était-il enclin à confondre brutalité avec force et vulgarité avec virilité. Voir dans l'antisémitisme "un animal jeune et d'une croissance prodigieuse,"<sup>22</sup> quelle aberration! Barrès ne prenait-il pas tout simplement les derniers soubresauts d'agonie de la classe des petits commerçants, des petits propriétaires, des petits rentiers, des petits esprits et des petits courages, pour les premières palpitations d'une vie nouvelle?

Certes Maurice Barrès entendait l'antisémitisme en tacticien de la politique plutôt qu'en moraliste. L'homme politique vit dans le présent le

22. *L'Appel au soldat*, p. 466.



plus immédiat. Il s'applique à utiliser les courants d'opinion qui existent. Il ne prétend pas porter sur eux des jugements de valeur. Sorellien à sa façon, Barrès voyait dans l'antisémitisme un mythe susceptible d'enflammer les imaginations et de mobiliser les énergies. Grâce à lui, il croyait pouvoir sauver de la disparition ces petits bourgeois dont l'existence était indispensable, à son avis, à l'équilibre et à l'originalité de la société française. En criant "mort aux Juifs" Barrès voulait dire "à bas le capitalisme," "à bas l'injustice sociale." Voilà pourquoi il s'attarde avec tant de complaisance dans *Leurs Figures* (1901) à nous décrire la personnalité et les douteuses activités des Baron de Reinach, des Cornélius Herz, des Arton, tous financiers cosmopolites, pratiquant le chantage avec autant d'aisance que la corruption. Si l'on tient vraiment à considérer que ces héros de faits divers scandaleux appartiennent à l'histoire, il faut préciser qu'ils appartiennent à l'histoire de la troisième République, à l'histoire des grandes sociétés par actions de la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, et non pas à l'histoire du judaïsme. Sans doute les ancêtres de ces personnages avaient-ils pratiqué la religion juive, vécu la vie étroite des communautés de l'Europe centrale. Mais, quant à eux, toute leur vie témoigne d'une rupture radicale avec les traditions et l'orthodoxie juive. Ils ne sauraient en aucune façon être considérés comme des représentants typiques et qualifiés d'Israël.

Il est vrai que ces banquiers juifs rendent à Barrès un très grand service. Ils lui fournissent un prétexte pour concentrer sur un seul personnage en quelque sorte symbolique — le Juif — toutes ses haines et toutes ses rancunes. Au lieu de se disperser en un ressentiment puéril et vain contre tous les peuples de la terre, sa xénophobie trouve chez les Juifs cosmopolites un abrégé de tout ce qu'il déteste. C'est, ainsi, par exemple, que les Juifs gras et sales, parlant un épouvantable jargon teutonique, qu'on rencontre si souvent dans son œuvre, représentent une Allemagne qu'on peut insulter et mépriser sans crainte. N'est-il pas remarquable en effet que, dans l'œuvre de Barrès, les qualificatifs "juif" et "allemand" soient souvent synonymes. Cela nous semble aujourd'hui un paradoxe d'une amère ironie mais s'explique par le fait que la plupart des Juifs que Barrès avait pu côtoyer dans sa jeunesse devaient être d'origine germanique. Les Juifs polonais et russes fuyant les pogromes qui suivirent l'assassinat d'Alexandre II n'immigrèrent en masse qu'après 1881.

De tous les Juifs que Barrès fait défiler dans ses livres, Cornélius Herz est sans doute le plus officieux. Né de parents allemands, il a été élevé aux Etats-Unis. Revenu en France adulte, il y a poursuivi une carrière des plus douteuses au temps de Panama et finalement il a trouvé refuge en Angleterre. En mettant Herz en vedette Barrès veut nous persuader que le plus retentissant scandale financier de la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle a été l'œuvre des Juifs. En réalité Herz et ses amis n'ont été que des intermé-

diaires entre la société fondée par M. de Lesseps, les politiciens et les journalistes dont le concours était nécessaire au lancement des emprunts. Ils ont inspiré des articles de complaisance, acheté des votes. La belle affaire! Pourquoi les tenir pour seuls responsables de l'immoralité de ceux qui les employaient et de ceux qui se laissaient corrompre? On les jugerait aujourd'hui avec beaucoup plus d'indulgence qu'autrefois et l'on ne verrait en eux que des "lobbyists" indiscrets et maladroits.

D'ailleurs Barrès et ses héros manifestent un ressentiment plus viv encore à l'égard des Juifs qui, non contents d'être les intermédiaires et les banquiers du système capitaliste, sont devenus eux-mêmes entrepreneurs et industriels. Maîtres de forge en Lorraine, ces Juifs fortunés et dynamiques exercent une sorte de souveraineté sur les populations locales. Quelle cuisante humiliation pour le petit peuple autochtone cher à Barrès! Les paysans appauvris par la division des parcelles sont obligés d'abandonner leurs champs pour l'usine. Sturel, par exemple, apprend avec consternation qu'à Custines, ils sont obligés d'entrer au service des Fould, riche famille juive, propriétaire des hauts fourneaux. "Fould fixe les salaires, augmente ou réduit le chiffre de la population, met en valeur selon son choix, telle ou telle région de terrain. Notaire, médecin, député, fonctionnaires, employés des chemins de fer, tous, directement ou par des intermédiaires échelonnés vivent dans sa dépendance. Lui-même se ligue avec des égaux pour résister à des plus puissants. C'est une féodalité, comme jadis, à la fois exploiteuse et protectrice."<sup>23</sup> Ne croirait-on pas entendre ici un écho affaibli des thèses que défendait à l'époque Werner Sombart et dont il donna une version définitive dans l'ouvrage qu'il publia en 1911, *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben* (Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot). Il est peu probable que Barrès ait suivi les travaux de l'économiste allemand. La convergence des idées des deux hommes n'en est que plus révélatrice. Tous deux, en effet, voient dans les Juifs un peuple méridional, nomade. A en croire Sombart, leurs instincts de pillage, affinés par des siècles de pratique, leur assurent une victoire facile sur les peuples septentrionaux au milieu desquels ils s'établissent. Ces peuples d'agriculteurs sédentaires, de techniciens créateurs, plus habiles à agir sur les choses que sur les hommes et malheureusement dépourvus de tout talent pour le commerce, se laissent dépouiller par leurs Juifs. Plus encore, les nouveaux maîtres de Custines nouveaux féodaux, bien indignes successeurs de l'ancienne aristocratie locale, ignorent ou méprisent "l'âme" de leurs serfs. Il n'ont ni compréhension, ni sympathie, ni indulgence pour la faiblesse, les préjugés, les ignorances des humbles qu'ils exploitent. Ils estiment n'avoir d'autre responsabilité à leur égard que celle de leur payer un salaire que la loi d'airain fixe au niveau le plus bas possible. Les notions du "juste prix," de "juste sa-

23. *L'Appel au soldat*, pp. 311-13.

laire" définies par Saint Thomas leur demeurent étrangères. Ils ne connaissent que la loi du marché. Voilà ce qui désespère, ce qui indigna Barrès et ses héros.

On remarquera ce qu'il y a d'abusif et de schématique dans la perspective barrésienne qui affecte d'attribuer aux seuls Juifs la responsabilité de la destruction des collectivités locales, de la dépersonnalisation et de la déshumanisation de la société qui apparaissaient à la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle comme les résultats les plus évidents de la révolution industrielle. Mais par le biais de l'économie Barrès parvient à faire coïncider son vague socialisme national avec son antisémitisme. Il observe que les Juifs, accueillis libéralement en France parce qu'on espérait d'eux qu'ils contribueraient à l'essor du pays ont failli le pourrir. Barrès, lui, suggère que "les éléments énergiques dont il est bien vrai que la société française a besoin, elle les trouvera en elle-même, en favorisant l'accession des plus déshérités, des plus pauvres, en les élevant à plus de bien-être, à plus d'instruction professionnelle."<sup>24</sup> Le raisonnement de Barrès, cherchant à opposer les prolétaires à l'intelligentsia juive venue d'Europe orientale ne manque pas d'intérêt. Il nous fait comprendre incidemment l'origine de ce qu'on a appelé l'antisémitisme populaire qui toucha même certains milieux socialistes comme le démontre fort clairement Byrnes dans son ouvrage *Antisemitism in Modern France*.<sup>25</sup>

L'espèce de vertige, parfois accompagné de panique, qui saisit certains intellectuels lorsqu'ils doivent se mesurer à la redoutable intelligence de leurs concurrents juifs, explique peut-être la faveur que rencontra l'antisémitisme en France au temps de l'affaire Dreyfus parmi les journalistes, les avocats, les ecclésiastiques et quelques hommes de lettres. Non seulement les écrits de Barrès mais bien des pages de Gide<sup>26</sup> et plus tard de Giraudoux attestent l'existence d'une réaction brutale chez les esprits par ailleurs délicats et raffinés au contact de certaines virtuosités juives.

A l'origine de la haine antisémite, en même temps peut-être que la conscience d'un dommage injustement causé aux Juifs, se trouvent souvent aussi l'ignorance et la peur. Installés depuis à peine une ou deux générations en Lorraine ou à Paris les Juifs ont déjà assimilé la langue du pays et sa pensée claire. Ils triomphent dans les concours universitaires et multiplient les réussites foudroyantes dans tous les domaines. Doivent-ils ces succès à leur mérite, à leur travail? Barrès ne peut se résoudre à l'admettre. Il préfère insinuer qu'ils résultent de machiavéliques intrigues. Dans son programme de Nancy, que nous citons plus haut, il affirmait: "On les a nommés préfets, juges, trésoriers, officiers parce qu'ils ont l'argent qui corrompt."<sup>1</sup>

24. *Scènes et doctrines*, II, 162.

25. V. Robert F. Byrnes, *Antisemitism in Modern France* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1950), pp. 156-79.

26. *Journal 1889-1939*, Pléiade, p. 396.

Plus encore, argumente Barrès, auraient-ils parfaitement assimilé la culture nationale que leur nature juive les obligerait à en trahir l'esprit. Ils en ont absorbé tout ce qui est perceptible à l'intelligence. Mais qu'est-ce donc que l'intelligence? Ce qui constitue la personnalité d'une race, le *Moi* profond de ses enfants, n'est-ce pas tout autre chose? La "petite secousse," les forces obscures de l'inconscient, l'expérience et la sagesse que nous ont instillé la terre et les morts. "Ah! que m'importe la qualité d'âme qui contredit une sensibilité" s'écrie Barrès dans l'examen qu'il fit un jour de son premier roman.<sup>27</sup> Aussi intelligent, aussi distingué soit-il, l'étranger demeurera, pendant plusieurs générations, irrémédiablement "autre," il sera un "barbare."

L'humanisme qui affirme l'unité de la race humaine n'est plus dans cette perspective qu'une dangereuse anarchie mentale. L'universalité de la vérité et de la culture, une illusion, un leurre. Les meilleures choses qu'on puisse trouver dans le caractère et la pensée de l'étranger contiennent en effet des poisons pour notre tempérament national.<sup>28</sup>

En bref, Barrès a fort bien exprimé la thèse implicite de toutes les sociétés aristocratiques et de tous les systèmes qui les justifient, thèse selon laquelle il existerait entre les hommes de profondes différences de nature. Les Juifs, plus réalistes peut-être, ne reconnaissent entre les individus que des différences de degré. Ils ne contestent pas l'existence de hiérarchies, mais il leur prêtent un caractère fonctionnel et non pas transcendant.

Dans ses œuvres de jeunesse Barrès invitait ses compatriotes à renforcer l'originalité psychologique de la France en détournant tous les courants allogènes qui tenteraient de se fondre dans sa tradition nationale. Sous prétexte de purifier et d'exalter, une telle méthode aboutissait en fait à diviser et plus encore à appauvrir une nation déjà travaillée par tant de ferments de discorde. L'affaire Dreyfus en fit bien la preuve.

L'expérience de la guerre, sans lui faire abandonner le nationalisme, amena Barrès à en élargir la conception. Vers la fin de sa vie il inclinait vers une sorte de fédéralisme culturel qui aurait favorisé le développement dans leur propre sens de toutes les familles spirituelles dont les différents rameaux, solidement liés mais non confondus, offriraient au monde, en un bouquet multicolore, l'image de l'âme française. L'âme juive, brillante et fragile, comme une fleur exotique, aurait pu contribuer à donner plus d'éclats encore à cette gerbe de forces spirituelles.

Ceci dit, il est difficile d'oublier les réactions que Barrès prêtait à Sturel lors de sa rencontre avec Cornélius Herz, dont la figure tient une telle place dans le roman de l'énergie nationale. Bien que Herz fût malade, couché, la première impression de Sturel ce n'est "... ni le malaise, ni la curiosité, ni l'émotion tragique, mais une sorte de haut sentiment d'être

27. *Sous l'œil des barbares* (Emile-Paul, 1911), p. 20.

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 22.

né sur le sol de France d'une honnête lignée. Il ne regarda point ce malade, entouré de sa femme et de ses enfants, avec humanité, mais avec cette froide indifférence, facile à transformer en haine, qui sépare les représentants de deux espèces naturelles."<sup>29</sup>

Nous dira-t-on encore que Barrès n'était pas raciste? Certes il refuse de distinguer des races proprement dites parmi les différentes variétés provinciales qui peuplent la France. Il s'en est expliqué dans *Mes Cahiers*.<sup>30</sup> Mais il y a bien des degrés dans le préjugé racial qui, de plus, n'est qu'une des formes, parmi beaucoup d'autres, de l'antisémitisme. Sans aller tout à fait aussi loin que Robert Byrnes qui écrivait en 1950: "Maurice Barrès . . . had many of the attitudes towards blood, the state, and the individual which Hitler developed and put into practice,"<sup>31</sup> il faut bien reconnaître que Barrès a contribué à aviver la méfiance d'une partie de l'opinion française à l'égard des Juifs, de ces Juifs dont lui-même voulait ignorer la réalité humaine pour n'en retenir que le mythe. La responsabilité morale de Barrès en cette matière nous paraît d'autant plus lourde qu'il a joué à fond la carte antisémite, tant sur le plan politique que dans son œuvre romanesque, lorsque les injustes accusations qui pesaient sur le capitaine Dreyfus mettaient tous les Juifs en difficulté.

Nous ne voudrions pas conclure cette tentative d'évaluation des idées de Barrès sur les Juifs sans donner la parole à l'un des intéressés. Barrès a trouvé en effet dans les milieux juifs quelques uns de ses plus fervents admirateurs, voire de ses disciples. Son ironie mordante et les sarcasmes dont il les abreuvait n'éloigna pas les Juifs de son œuvre, bien au contraire. André Spire remarque à ce propos: "A nous Juifs, sa leçon de *culture du Moi*, il la donne de manière un peu rude . . . elle sauva quelques uns des plus militants d'entre nous du doute de soi de cette attitude hésitante, timide, humiliée, où s'enlisaient les Juifs français aux environs de 1900. . . ."<sup>32</sup>

Vigoureux et éloquent adversaire, Barrès, en incitant les écrivains juifs "à fixer l'âme juive dans une œuvre d'imagination"<sup>33</sup> les a aidés à prendre conscience de leur véritable originalité. André Spire n'hésite pas à affirmer que c'est en partie à son influence que nous devons le grand mouvement de renaissance spirituelle qu'on a pu observer depuis un demi-siècle dans les lettres juives.

Curieux homme que ce Barrès tant admiré par les uns, si cordialement détesté par les autres, à qui pourtant il sera beaucoup pardonné parce que ses attitudes irritantes nous empêchent de nous installer dans la suffisance et le confort intellectuel.

29. *Leurs Figures*, pp. 209-10.

30. *Mes Cahiers*, Février 1898-mai 1902 (Plon, 1930), II, 142.

31. *Antisemitism in Modern France*, p. 14.

32. *Quelques juifs et demi-juifs* (Grasset, 1928), I, vii.

33. *Ibid.*, p. vi.

## REVIEWS

*The Invention of the Sonnet and Other Studies in Italian Literature.* By Ernest Hatch Wilkins. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1959. Pp. 354. The sterling scholarship of Professor Wilkins has been well recognized and admired for several decades by students of Italian literature. His contributions in the field of Petrarchan studies, for example, are fundamental to anyone who would seriously investigate the works and life of the fourteenth-century Italian poet. However, as the present book shows (and as his *History of Italian Literature* earlier demonstrated), Wilkins' interest and love for Italian literature embrace far more than any one figure or problem. The volume, in fact, includes thirty essays and notes (varying in length from two to thirty-eight pages) ranging widely not only over the centuries but also among widely differing subjects from the origins of the sonnet to the use of the name Arcadia in America. Most of the articles have appeared previously in American and European periodicals and date from as far back as 1915. These, however, have been revised in most cases so as to take into account more recent scholarship and pertinent bibliography. They thus supersede the earlier forms.

In the first essay, "The Invention of the Sonnet," on the basis of an acute analysis of the metrical features of the earliest sonnets and the early lyric poetry of Provence, Northern France, Germany, and Italy, Wilkins easily disposes of the suggestion that the sonnet owes anything to non-Italian sources and he is able to refute effectively one of the two major theories as to the source of the sonnet—that theory which holds that the sonnet derives, directly or indirectly, from a Frederician *canzone* stanza used as a separate composition. Wilkins' own conclusions are that the sonnet is an artistic invention of Giacomo da Lentino who derived the octave from the Sicilian *strambotto* (a folk lyric form), specifically from the eight-line hendecasyllabic *canzona* with its distichal structure rhyming ABABABAB. Concerning the sestet, the author rejects the idea that it was derived from a six-line *canzona* (thus rejecting the second major theory of the sonnet which traces it to a combination of popular forms), and argues for the theory that it is a purely artistic invention "without reference to any pre-existing form" (p. 38) and that Giacomo da Lentino devised it as two tercets rhyming CDECDE which were meant to serve as an artistic conclusion to the octave. It may be objected that no theory of the sonnet can indicate what the first sonnet derives from since there is no incontestable evidence to support it, and Wilkins does not state his conclusions as categorical. Yet his opinions are not arrived at lightly or hastily. Rather they result from so exhaustive and cogent an analysis of the available material as to impose themselves as the most plausible theory.

In "The Canzone and the Minnesong," proceeding again via an internal analysis of metrical forms and via the study of the relationship between German poets and the Sicilian court of Frederick, Wilkins adduces persuasive



evidence that the German minnesong "did in fact have a discernible, if secondary, influence upon the technique of the *canzone*" (p. 48). The author is careful to point to the curious phenomenon that the influence is entirely formal, there being an apparently total absence of influence in content.

Many of the articles are of a nature that forbids summaries as they consist of philological documentation of very specialized material. Some titles are enough to give an indication of the subjects treated: "Variations on the Name *Philocolo*," "The Genealogy of the Early Editions of the *Genealogia Deorum*," "The Genealogy of the Genealogical Trees of the *Genealogia Deorum*" (Wilkins here demonstrates that the trees of Boccaccio's important work are related to three traditions of genealogical charting); "On the Dates of Composition of the *Morgante*"; "On the Earliest Editions of the *Morgante*." In these and other such essays, which have already proven of service to scholars, the research is immense and the presentation compelling.

In "The Tale of Julia and Pruneo," Wilkins studies a manuscript (MS Typ 24 in the collection of the Department of Graphic Arts of the Harvard College Library) containing a *novella* written by a fifteenth-century North-eastern Italian author. The tale is seen to have eleven striking points of resemblance in content to the story of Romeo and Juliet as told in the famous version (c. 1520) by Luigi da Porta, so that it seems "highly probable that da Porta knew and used either the existing *novella* of Julia and Pruneo or a lost version very closely related to it" (p. 240).

The essay "On the Nature and Extent of the Italian Renaissance" points schematically to the complex of many interrelated strands that characterized Italian culture from approximately 1250 to 1600. After indicating the classicizing and re-naissant tendency (the conscious desire to resume a "classic" tradition that was felt to have been interrupted) as the major strand, Wilkins notes that there are important strands in which the classic elements are secondary or nonexistent: the political realism of Guicciardini and of Paruta, the direct study of nature among painters, the geographical explorations of the Italians, and the advances in science. There are, then, naissant as well as re-naissant creativities marking the period. Moreover, a significant part of Italian Renaissance literature continues medieval cultural traditions. Thus recognition is made of the overlapping of cultural traditions.

"Periods in the History of Italian Literature" is a lucid examination of the problem of periodization for Italian literary history. Histories of Italian literature since Girolamo Tiraboschi's eighteenth-century work have tended to adopt a plan of periodization by centuries, a plan which is clearly inadequate because of its dependence upon a source that is extraneous to the phenomena of literature itself. Periodization by centuries as applied to Italian literature, Wilkins observes, is unfortunate in at least six respects: "It tends (1) to create in the mind of the student an impression that each of the several centuries has a literary unity of its own," which in turn tends (2) to submerge the significance of the individual writer and (3) to obscure time relationships within the period. It further (4) "involves the assignment of every writer (except Dante) either to one century or to another," (5) "fails to recognize, or to weigh sufficiently, some of the actual moments of

pause in literary production that occur from time to time," and (6) "tends to result in an inadequate recognition of the community of conditions of life and of literary activity shared by closely contemporary writers." The danger of falling into the above errors is perhaps less than Professor Wilkins makes it out to be. It may be a real danger for the reader with little or no knowledge of Italian literature and history, but surely no one who has taken the trouble to read Ariosto and Tasso or to read about them in an adequate history of Italian literature will think of them as breathing the same cultural climate or expressing similar visions of life or even similar literary ideals. This, of course, is to argue in favor of Wilkins' demands for a more realistic method of periodization, and indeed, I hasten to endorse such a plan as his own, principally, because all serious students of Italian literature do have some such division in mind, although it be less clearly articulated than Wilkins' schema. Wilkins has had the conviction and orderliness of mind to carry out his own plan in his *History of Italian Literature*. It is, I believe, a good division because of its practicality, its reference to purely literary data, and its principle of literary contemporaries which recognizes the inevitability of overlapping, i.e., the fact that certain tendencies and ideals may be under way during a time in which other tendencies and ideals are dominant. Thus the author distinguishes 1250-1300 as the Guittonian Period and 1280-1325 as the Dantean Period. The division is into nineteen such periods from 1200 to 1915 with the titles of the periods taking their names in most cases from an outstanding literary figure.

Most of the essays show Wilkins' solid contributions as an indefatigable erudite or theorist. There are other essays in the book that reveal another side of the author that is no less well known and admirable, that of the sensitive and intelligent reader and interpreter of poetry, particularly of the *Divine Comedy*. A significant essay of this type is "Reminiscence and Anticipation in the *Divine Comedy*." Here Wilkins notes Dante's habit of referring at various times throughout his poem to experiences or persons or objects or circumstances pertaining to some region or regions that he has previously described (reminiscences). For example, on several occasions after Limbus has been left behind, in the conversation of Virgil or others reference is made to that region in such a way that the reader acquires knowledge of several additional elements pertaining to it. On the other hand, there are the references to things not yet described (anticipations) and which Dante later in the poem does or does not mention. The great poetic values of these techniques are "the more perfect unification of the poem [because of the linking effect resulting from the many cases of reminiscence and anticipation] and the enhancement of its reality" (p. 88).

"Gradual Approach in the *Divine Comedy*" illustrates that especially at points marking the beginning or the completion of major phases of the action of his journey, Dante makes use of the technique of *gradual approach*, i.e., "distant views succeeded by closer views, and at last by arrival; perceptions that attain a greater and at last a perfect clarity." (p. 91). This device is related to the use of reminiscence and anticipation, and like them it serves to create greater vividness and to heighten the sense of reality.

Still another narrative technique is studied in "Cantos, Regions, and Transitions in the *Divine Comedy*." Following the Prologue of the whole poem, Dante begins and ends an account of a particular region in each of four successive cantos (*Inf.* III-VI) without any account of transitions from one region to the next. Such a pattern, if followed throughout the poem would result in a monotony serious enough to impair the power of the poem (p. 104). Fortunately, variation begins in Cantos VII and VIII of the *Inferno* after which Dante "is no longer bound by the feeling that a given canto should be devoted to the complete account of a given region," and seems even deliberately to avoid exactness in the correspondence of canto to region (p. 105). Furthermore, from *Inf.* VIII (in which there is primarily an account not of a region but of a transition—from the fifth circle of Hell to the City of Dis) throughout the rest of the poem, "the description of transitions becomes for Dante a major resource" (p. 105). The result is that only one other canto in the poem (*Inf.* XX) begins and ends with the beginning and the ending of the account of a particular region. Here too then, we may interpolate, the general poetic effect is to enhance the sense of unity in the poem, keep interest alive, and give a greater sense of movement and actuality to the narrative.

Throughout this book we find the gratifying characteristics of Wilkins' scholarly habits and style that are too often missing from recent scholarly writings: an exhaustive familiarity with the bibliography concerning the problem under investigation, a thoroughness of treatment that leaves no loose ends, the greatest exactness and clarity in language and exposition. (NICOLAS J. PERELLA, *University of California, Berkeley*)

*Petrarch's Later Years*. By Ernest H. Wilkins. Medieval Academy of America, Pub. No. 70. Cambridge, Mass., 1959. Pp. xiv + 321. The analytical bibliography of Professor Wilkins' works, compiled in the testimonial issue of *Romance Philology* (February, 1960), will reveal at a glance how much Italianists owe him. The publication of such a testimonial, moreover, demonstrates that they are aware of their indebtedness and are profoundly grateful. With this final volume of "the intimate biography of Petrarch," he brings to a close an enormous labor, for which only his patience and knowledge could have sufficed, and the result is a permanent contribution, a work that will never need re-doing. Any future biography of the poet will have to take its point of departure from the irreducible facts so painstakingly assembled in Professor Wilkins' volumes.

This is not to say that the work is at all a definitive biography in the wider sense. His strictly chronological method and great distrust of generalization preclude any such achievement. Nevertheless, for the external details of Petrarch's life, and for the chronology of the letters, Professor Wilkins' book will continue to be authoritative for many years to come.

The author's meticulous scholarship makes it difficult to read this volume casually, as one would the ordinary biography. Sometimes his scrupulosity results in unpleasant stylistic distortions: for example, the expressions "it is then slightly probable" and "there is therefore some slight probability,"

which both occur on page 281, undoubtedly refer to a real degree of likelihood somewhere between possibility and probability, but they are surely tiresome. Again, the opening paragraph of chapter XX begins with this sentence: "About noon on an Ascension Day that may have been 12 May 1363, 3 May 1364, 23 May 1365, or 15 May 1366 Pietro da Muglio's mother-in-law, being in Venice (presumably to witness the ceremonies appropriate to the day), went to call on Petrarch, whom she had never seen." The paragraph is footnoted with exasperating care: "Slight indications favoring an earlier rather than a later date appear to be evenly balanced by equally slight indications favoring a later rather than an earlier date" (p. 137). Nevertheless, the scholar who comes to the volume as to a reference work of high authority will be glad to see such indications of exhaustiveness and reliability. The usefulness of the work to such a scholar would have been increased if more of the material had been included in chronological tables, such as that used by Professor Wilkins for the period January-June 1367 (p. 123).

In any purely chronological account of a man's life, a certain thematic discontinuity is inevitable, for when time is the only thread holding facts together, then the transitions from fact to fact, and from paragraph to paragraph, are bound to be gratuitous and therefore jolting. In chapter X, for instance, after a brief paragraph summarizing Petrarch's ideas about the necessity of keeping secrets, we are presented with these two sentences, closing the chapter and the year 1362 in the poet's life with a thoroughly irreducible detail: "Two Venetian ships tied up for the winter directly in front of Petrarch's house. They were as large as the large house itself, and their masts rose higher than the house" (p. 50). Occurring as it does in an account of Petrarch's life, however, the stylistic discontinuity does no more than reflect the discontinuity which was so characteristic of the poet's life and thought. To give form and unity to a life of Petrarch is to falsify history, for that unity is to be sought not in life but in letters. It is in Petrarch's image of himself, deliberately staged with rhetoric and not a little cant, that we consider the man; the rest escapes us.

To the poet whose mind, like his body, was agile but not "robust" (*Posteritati*), all external events must have seemed like gratuitous details in the void of an Augustinian present, which "nullum habet spatium." The events of his day-to-day existence tell us little about him because they seemed even then inexplicable, and therefore detestable, so much so "ut . . . qualibet etate natus esse semper optaverim, et hanc oblivisci, nisus animo me aliis semper inserere" (*Ibid.*, *Prose*, ed. Ricci, p. 6). For the man of will, a Julius Caesar, the gap between past and future could be spanned by meaningful action, the product of "vis animi" and "acrimonia" that Petrarch so admired (*De vita solit.* II; *Prose*, p. 494); for a man like himself, however, there was only the paralysis of modernity: "Ego nullo iam laqueo tentus sed visco consuetudinis pessime delinitus, alas explicare nequeo et ubi victus fuero, solutus hereo" (*Fam.* X, 3; *Prose*, p. 926). The vacuum of the present could be made meaningful only by a deliberate return to the distant past, and by a re-creation of the self in its image.

To remake the self is to remake into literature the reality which surrounds it. Petrarch's concern to effect this transformation is nowhere clearer than in the Latin re-telling of the story of *Griselda* from the *Decameron*. Professor Wilkins' single literary judgment is made in connection with that story: "Certain features of the story that in the *Decameron* retain the uncompromising starkness of their ultimate folk origin are humanized, and the story as told by Petrarch is therefore pleasanter, more plausible, and more impressive as a story of extraordinary patience. Petrarch's characterization is more painstaking; and his additions, omissions, and alterations serve in general to improve the story" (pp. 243-44). Few will agree with the final sentence, but all, I think, will perceive in these lines the gulf that separates Petrarch from Boccaccio and nature from literature.

Of Petrarch's staged image, and of the literary world that he created, Professor Wilkins has little to tell us, and this is perhaps as it should be. One can always read the *Letter to Posterity* and the *Canzoniere* for oneself. The biography should be consulted for history rather than literary criticism, for "truth" in all of its bareness; in this respect, Professor Wilkins tells us all that can be told. One can only wish him to continue for many more years to come that "constant toil and application" which are the food of his spirit.

As for the volume itself, it is compact and handsome. Chronological rubrics appear at the top of every page, and the indices are complete and relatively free from error.<sup>1</sup> The Medieval Academy of America is to be congratulated for making its publication possible. (JOHN FRECCERO, *The Johns Hopkins University*).

*La Chanson de Roland y el neotradicionalismo (Orígenes de la épica románica)*. Por Ramón Menéndez Pidal. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1959. Pp. 496. If Joseph Bédier's *Les Légendes épiques* led us on a pilgrimage, Don Ramón Menéndez Pidal's latest contribution guides us on a quest. We are obliged to search for connecting links between a hypothetical *canto noticiero* of the battle of Roncesvalles and the Oxford *Roland* and its reworkings.

To initiate the reader into the variable nature of the tradition, Sr. Pidal takes him to Spain where the *Roland* probably first began to circulate outside France. The *Historia* or *Crónica Semínense*, written in León about 1110 and declaring "*quaedam civitates a manibus paganorum eripuisse Franci falso asserunt*," represents the first-known Spanish protest against our epic. The *quaedam civitates* is merely a euphemism meant to counteract a *Roland* with opening verses similar to those of the Oxford version. It is to be supposed that the *Roland* poems circulating prior to this date did not include the fabulous Spanish conquests attributed to Charlemagne, since the author of the *Nota emilianense*, writing after the middle of the eleventh century, did not find it necessary to make any protest when incorporating Rolandian material into a chronicle of Spain. We note, too, that while the

1. I note only the omission of p. 212 from the entry "Albanzani, Donato" (p. 315). One rather serious omission of a line or phrase on page 181 (lines 7-8) of the review copy serves to obfuscate Professor Wilkins' argument about Petrarch's house in Arquà becoming his home. As it stands, the argument is unintelligible to this reviewer.

Spanish and African conquests alluded to in the Oxford version can still only be regarded as fictitious sites (*Cordres la citet* being the only exception), Charles' conquests in the rest of Europe, fabulous as some of them may be, are all identified with existing places. It becomes evident that the Spanish conquests must have been contrived at a much later date than the others, when the *Roland* had wandered far afield from its earlier, more realistic course.

That the writer of the Latin *Poema de Almería*, composed some time before 1157, knew a Castilian version of the *Roland*, has been considered probable since the days of Gaston Paris and Milá y Fontanals. The poet maintains that if *Alvarus* (i.e., Alvar Fáñez, of Cidian fame) had fought at the side of Roland and Oliver, the Saracens would have fallen "sub juga Francorum." This can only mean that the Castilian *Roland* of the first half of the twelfth century granted the French no vengeance for the Roncesvalles slaughter and precludes the existence of the Baligant episode. The *juglares*, fully aware of the independence of the Peninsular Moors, could no more accept the historical absurdity which that episode implied than could many non-Spanish adapters for its poetic absurdity. Nor could the *juglares* have translated the initial verses of the latest French *Roland*, expecting their listeners to believe that "Carlos en siete años había reconquistado lo que los reyes de León, Castilla y Aragón no habían podido hacer en cuatro siglos" (p. 152). The Castilian *Roland* of this period differed substantially from its French counterpart in beginning and end.

Menéndez Pidal's next objective, the primary one of his work, is to dispel the *silencio de los siglos*, that tenet basic to followers of Bédier which maintains that prior to the end of the eleventh century we have no references to a *Roland*. First, however, we must establish a historical basis for the origin of such an epic, examining both the event and the spirit that impelled its birth.

The author points out that in discussing the historicity of the *Roland*, Bédier's *aperçus* were limited to the *Annales royales* and Einhard's *Vita*. To reconstruct the historical event which produced our epic Sr. Pidal has availed himself of all the Latin and Arabic sources, without giving undue priority to the *Annales royales* as has heretofore been the custom of critics. The two salient features of this reconstruction are the following: (1) Charlemagne's rear guard was overcome through the combined efforts of Moors and Basques. Even if the Latin and Arabic documents were not describing one and the same episode, it is still unlikely that the Basques could by themselves defeat the rear guard of the Franks' powerful army without securing aid from some other source. (2) There was no vengeance for the Frankish disaster. The *Annales royales* and Einhard's *Vita* admit that Charles could not avenge this defeat at the time because the enemy had fled and taken cover under the darkness of night. This is not true, for as the *Moissiacense*, one of the shorter annals, admits, Charles had to rush back to France to ward off another attack by the Saxons, enemies of the "franceses de Francia" (p. 199). Further recourse to the Carolingian annals reveals that once having overcome the Saxons in 785, Charlemagne recommenced action in Spain with the occupation of Gerona. Pamplona is mentioned and



its inhabitants described as former friends of the Saracens. These facts might then serve to corroborate Sr. Pidal's own conclusions.

Bédier and his followers have consistently maintained that an important relationship exists between the Franco-Hispanic crusades of the eleventh century and the genesis of the *Roland*. Sr. Pidal argues that whereas the Carolingian expeditions in Spain were of national consequence, absorbing the interest of the French for more than a century and a half and finding important mention in the annals, the eleventh century French campaigns in Spain numbered four and were conducted by individual nobles without participation of the kings; they were neither mentioned in the general annals, described in specific chronicles as were the Eastern Crusades, nor heralded in song. Even if we were to admit that the earliest of these campaigns, that of Roger de Toeny in 1018, was capable of arousing unusual enthusiasm in anti-Saracen warfare, we now know that a *Roland* must have existed before then, for Mme Lejeune's research has shown that brothers were christened with the names *Oliverius-Rodlandus* from at least the very beginning of the eleventh century.

Menéndez Pidal's hypothesis for the birth of the *Chanson de Roland* is a "canto coetáneo basado en el suceso real" (p. 254). This *canto noticioso* or *noticia poética* (as opposed to fullfledged *poema*) could not have been an epico-lyric *cantilena*, for the Spanish epic tradition, be it that of the twelfth century or of the fifteenth, teaches us that those songs born to celebrate contemporary events are epic in style. It is only through persistent oral transmission that they develop lyric qualities as well. Primitive French and Spanish literature knew a popular form of history sung in the vernacular which existed side by side with the learned Latin form available only to scholars (*clérigos*). Sr. Pidal plans to expound on *historia cantada* and *historia escrita* in a forthcoming history of the Spanish epic.

We note first that all the Latin annals conceal Charlemagne's Spanish defeat until the *Annales royales* of 829 unexpectedly admit this blow to Frankish pride. This sudden impulse "to tell the truth" is matched by Einhard's *Vita*, written between 829 and 836. Most interesting in regard to the *Vita* is that in a study made of its many manuscripts by J. W. Thompson in 1926, the prototype of those which exclude the name *Hruodlandus* was shown to be a first edition or advance copy presented to Louis the Pious. It was only in the second edition that Einhard added the less prominent but more popular heroic name to those of *Egghardus* and *Anshelmus*. If Menéndez Pidal is right, the *Royales* and the *Vita* were forced to yield to a "*vox populi* imposible de acallar, por estar más difundida, por ser más poderosa que la letra escrita de los Anales divulgados oficialmente" (p. 257).

What connecting links have we between the hypothetical *Roland* of this period and the Oxford version? Sr. Pidal insists that the *Vita Hludowici* of the Limousin "Astronomer," written after 840, is referring to a *Roland*, and not Einhard's *Vita*, when in describing the attack to the rear guard it says that certain persons were killed, "*quorum nomina, quia vulgata sunt, dicere supersedi.*" It is highly unlikely that the author would have used seven words to avoid repeating two or three names *quia vulgata sunt*, if those

names were known only to a chosen few who could read the Latin work.

This brings us to the first of Sr. Pidal's two tenth-century *hallazgos*. The *Annales mettenses* of 903 and its derivative, Abbot Reginon's *Chronicon*, completed in 906, both presumably based on a somewhat earlier original, defy actual history and all Latin and Arabic historiography, telling us that the Saracens of Saragossa, terrified by Charles' army, gave them hostages and an enormous quantity of gold: "obsidione cincta Caesaraugustana civitate, territi Sarraceni obsides dederunt cum immenso pondere auri." This is an early reflection of the poetic action hinted at in the *Nota emilianense* one hundred and fifty years later when it refers to the *munera multa* proffered the French, and of the actual episode as we know it in the Oxford text. This episode "no pertenece a Turoldo, sino a un anónimo de los años finales del siglo IX" (p. 280).

The second *hallazgo* is more intriguing. The *Annales anianenses* which, because of its content, Sr. Pidal relegates to the middle of the tenth century rather than to the end of the ninth as previously supposed, describes Charles' battle with the Saracens, ending: "et de hora nona factus est sol hora secunda." Sr. Pidal interprets this statement as follows: *hora nona* is equivalent to the setting of the sun; *hora secunda* implies the sun's rising. In other words, the light of day continued beyond its normal duration. We are dealing with the same miraculous lengthening of the day depicted in the Oxford text (178a-181a).

Our best key to a pre-Oxford-type *Roland* remains the *Nota emilianense*. Recent paleographical probings of tenth- and eleventh-century documents at San Millán indicate that the *Nota* could have been written any time between 1054 and 1076. Here we have a document which, in spite of its brevity, and even discounting linguistic evidence, embodies too many details in common with the twelfth-century Carolingian epics to be based on any but the same epic tradition. The *Nota* is a reflection of an eleventh-century "*Cantar de Rodlane*." It tells us that one of *duodecim neptis* (probably based on a *los doze primos*, derived from a hypothetical French *li duze primes* or some such Provençal form in an earlier *Roland* version and mistakenly interpreted by the Latin scribe as meaning "cousins," hence nephews of Charles, rather than *primi viri* in the Latin sense of the word) served the Emperor a different month of the year. It is doubtful that this idea originated with a Spanish *Roland*. Sr. Pidal observes that four of the six "*primos*" mentioned in the *Nota* are included among the five names in the apocryphal Sainte-Yriex document (ca. 1090) and all six are found in the twelve listed by the *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, concluding that this work contains the oldest complete list of Peers we have and may indeed acknowledge an institution not unlike that of the Table Ronde.

We have been confronted here with the finest example of the Spanish master's lifetime concept of *tradición*. Recent studies in medieval nomenclature, detailed commentaries on the Provençal, Spanish and Norwegian versions of the *Roland*, and especially the discovery of the *Nota emilianense* have pointed to a chain of *Rolands* from at least the eleventh century onwards. Sr. Pidal's conclusions take us still further back in time and imply that much

that was first theorized by Gaston Paris for the French epic is no longer mere theory; we have reached the stage of *traditio vindicata*. (BARTON SHOLOD, Brooklyn, N.Y.)

*Poética y realidad en el cancionero peninsular de la Edad Media*. Por Eugenio Asensio. (Biblioteca Románica Hispánica I, núm. 34). Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1957. Pp. 288. In this publication the author intends to provide a history of the primitive Western lyric. A revision of theories of the origin and development of lyric poetry in the Romance countries has been needed ever since the important and amazing discovery of the Mozarabic *jaryas*, short snatches of early Hispanic songs that appear as refrains in refined Arabic and Hebrew compositions called *muwaschahas*. These fragments of popular songs were discovered and published by Dámaso Alonso in 1949. In the following decade further songs were discovered by Emilio García Gómez and valuable commentaries were published by Ramón Menéndez Pidal and Leo Spitzer. S. M. Stern collected all the extant *jaryas* in his valuable publication, *Les Chansons mozarabes* (Palermo, 1953). As soon as the first *jaryas* appeared, it was clear that they were related to certain types of Portuguese lyrics found in the Cancioneiros da Ajuda, da Vaticana, and Colocci-Brancuti.

The author sets about his task by reviewing the theories of the growth of lyric poetry advanced by critics of the romantic and positivistic periods. His revised theories are to be based on the study of form, a more esthetic approach than the earlier study of sources, motifs, or reconstruction of the life and times of the poet. The study is divided into three chapters: I. Themes; II. The Provençal Influence; and III. Parallelistic Verse. In the first section, the purpose is to show how the great unifying element in peninsular verse was the song of the beloved (*canción de mujer*) which attracted and inspired other lyric and narrative types, such as the pilgrimage song (*canción de romería*), the May song (*canción de mayo*) and the sea song (*cantiga marinera*). All these types, the author believes, are native to the Iberian peninsula rather than imitations of lost French songs as maintained by Jeanroy. The second division on the Provençal influence does not deal with specific instances of that influence but rather seeks to show how elements of Provençal inspiration may be detected. Such touches as: the haughty, proud damsel who dominates her lover as a king dominates a vassal, subtle antithesis of the type *fazer bem* versus *fazer mal* or *aver bem* versus *aver mal*, or the casuistry of love are samples of trans-Pyrenean influence.

The third chapter of this work, which comprises approximately two-thirds of the study, deals with the poetics of parallelistic verse. Parallelism is an ancient poetic practice, a vestigial pattern of expression from the time when poetry was intimately linked with the dance, the choral song, religious ritual, and magic. Parallelism is to be found in language, in structure and in thought. It is an intricate pattern of variation and repetition, of immobility or, as Asensio prefers to call it, "retarded progression." The technical discussion of parallelism (pp. 75-132) is heavy and difficult to follow. There is a serious shortage of illustrative verse to show the multiple variations to which

the author refers. Technical terms are bandied about without the favor of a technical glossary. The author criticizes at length the earlier work of Carolina Michaëlis de Vasconcellos and J. J. Nunes, apparently with ample reason, but certainly in a dull and tiresome manner. He especially takes to task J. Romeu Figueras on the subject of *cosautes*. Again reason seems to be with our author. Throughout the middle section of this work there are many digressions and the reader is confused until he reaches the valuable and interesting discussion of the ballad, *Fonte frida*. Here is where the author reveals his wide knowledge of pagan and Christian motifs and his ability to awaken appreciation in a student. It is unfortunate that these absorbing pages should be embedded in a welter of tiresome trivia. (LAWRENCE B. KIDDLE, *University of Michigan*)

*Petite Histoire de la langue française. II. De la Révolution à nos jours.* Par Charles Bruneau. Paris: Colin, 1958. Pp. viii + 366. Livre important parce qu'il est de M. Bruneau, parce qu'il traite du français moderne et contemporain, lequel a été moins étudié que l'ancien et le moyen français ou que la langue classique, parce qu'enfin nous avons dans ce second volume comme la préfiguration—à l'usage du grand public, il est vrai—de ce qui sera le couronnement de la monumentale *Histoire* de Brunot et Bruneau. Celle-ci, en effet, n'en est encore qu'au Parnasse et nous devons nous contenter, pour connaître la pensée du grand continuateur de Brunot, d'études fragmentaires comme sa "Phrase d'art du XIX<sup>e</sup> et du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle" (*Gedenkschrift E. Lerch*, 1955). Si "petite" qu'elle soit, cette histoire est bien plus développée que les chapitres parallèles des ouvrages de Vossler, Dauzat, Von Wartburg et Marcel Cohen. Elle est aussi très différente; aggravant une tendance qui se manifeste dans l'œuvre mère dès après la mort de Brunot, elle met l'accent sur les langues littéraires, au détriment de la langue écrite en général et *a fortiori* de la langue parlée.

Ce n'est pas que le français commun soit négligé. Ch. Bruneau souligne ce qui le caractérise à l'époque moderne: son avènement comme langue vraiment nationale par delà les barrières de classes et les particularismes locaux, grâce aux communications rapides, à la grande presse, et à la dictature des grammairiens, autre manifestation, dans l'enseignement, de la centralisation administrative. L'influence des facteurs sociologiques sur le vocabulaire est bien notée: les changements que provoquent la Révolution, l'anglomanie, l'influence des "cabarets" après celle des salons, le "flirt" avec l'argot, etc; le rôle contraire des dictionnaires qui cherchent moins à refléter l'usage qu'à en freiner l'évolution et à le stabiliser—résultat de l'idée ou du préjugé de norme. Mais ces remarques, si judicieuses qu'elles soient, sont loin d'égaliser en étendue l'étude de la langue littéraire. Elles souffrent, et ceci est plus grave, de l'absence de discussions concrètes, avec exemples à l'appui: aucune précision sur la nature de la langue des journaux, de l'influence du roman-feuilleton (pp. 77, 96, 165); pratiquement rien sur la grammaire; les quelques faits précis sont de vocabulaire (encore les emprunts aux langues techniques et étrangères sont-ils négligés). C'est que les changements historiques s'observent plus facilement dans le vocabulaire, que la structure se

modifie beaucoup plus lentement, et que, dans le tableau qui nous est peint, les grandes lignes sont dessinées par contraste avec le français standard d'aujourd'hui. Cette méthode est un travers commun à beaucoup d'études diachroniques: un E. Huguet ne décrira de la langue du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle que ce qui en a disparu, un H. Galinsky étudiera l'américain dans la mesure où il est infidèle à l'anglais britannique. Ce qu'il faudrait, c'est, pour chaque état de langue choisi comme jalon de l'évolution historique, une description *structurale*, et qui dépasse, si possible, les limites de la langue littéraire. Si les documents nous manquent pour le passé, où l'on ne transcrivait guère le parlé, nous en avons beaucoup depuis la Révolution (voir, par ex., G. Gougenheim sur la langue populaire au début du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle). Les journaux pouvaient être étudiés, et d'abord dans leur écriture la plus terre-à-terre, dans les faits-divers: or les deux ou trois exemples choisis sont dûs à la plume de journalistes littérateurs. La langue des lettres intimes est saluée au passage, à l'époque romantique: rien n'en est dit, sinon qu'elles n'ont pas l'intérêt de celles de Flaubert, lesquelles sont ensuite oubliées, et on nous laisse à deviner en quoi une lettre de Mérimée est un "modèle de style familier." Ces défauts disparaîtront sans doute dans les volumes correspondants de la grande *Histoire*, mais il reste que la base implicite de comparaison n'est pas décrite: rien sur la structure du français moderne; le lecteur est laissé à sa propre conscience linguistique, telle que la grammaire officielle la contraint. Il y avait pourtant à considérer les forces qui modifient le français tel qu'on le parle et qu'on l'imagine: la radio, le cinéma, la télévision, oscillant entre les facilités de l'analogie et l'hypercorrection, de part et d'autre d'une "norme" qui ne représente pas tout l'état de langue contemporain. Autre aspect négligé: la prononciation, à part le rôle de l'e muet dans la prosodie et les curiosités tératologiques de Proust. En fait, la langue parlée n'est vue qu'à propos de styles (que j'appellerais mimétiques) qui prétendent reproduire dans l'œuvre d'art littéraire l'authenticité d'une parole typique (pp. 72-73, 143, 159-62, 337). Mais, quand bien même l'auteur s'effacerait entièrement derrière son personnage (Gide, par ex., p. 321), il n'y a jamais transcription pure et simple, mais suggestion du parlé à l'aide d'une structure spéciale et fragmentaire (Camus, p. 333); dans les systèmes les plus complets (Zola, p. 180), l'intonation manque, et des mises en relief *écrites* s'y substituent. L'auteur devrait dresser la liste des potentiels expressifs de la prononciation (A. Sauvageot l'a esquissée) avant d'étudier le cas particulier que représente leur exploitation artistique.

Quoi qu'il en soit, c'est à travers les changements du français littéraire que Ch. Bruneau retrace l'ensemble de l'évolution linguistique. Sans doute l'influence de l'écriture sur la langue est-elle plus forte en France qu'ailleurs; il n'en reste pas moins que c'est se limiter étrangement que de prendre des témoins tenus à quelque originalité esthétique et donc aberrants. On en vient par moments à de véritables chapitres d'histoire littéraire (sur la bataille romantique, sur Malraux, etc.). Il est vrai que, de ce point de vue, l'avenir de l'histoire littéraire est dans la stylistique historique: c'est, après tout, la forme qui fait la poésie et donne aux idées l'éternité. M. Bruneau réussit admirablement dans ce genre d'études (voir ses esquisses sur le système des temps créé par Flaubert, ou la langue des Symbolistes, ou le ton d'Apollinaire).

Dans les limites de son enquête, l'auteur aurait pu s'en tenir aux écrivains "corrects" qui nous donnent une idée de la norme à laquelle il se conforment. Il n'en est rien (p.163) et les "conformistes" Duhamel, Martin du Gard, Mérimée, R. Rolland sont éliminés. C'est que M. Bruneau, n'étant pas "structuraliste," ne fait pas l'histoire en comparant des états successifs, mais en collectionnant des cas isolés, quoique multiples, de changements. D'où sa préférence pour les auteurs "originaux," c'est-à-dire riches en emplois personnels, différents de l'usage. Trop souvent, il conclut de telles différences à des changements linguistiques, dont elles seraient la cause ou le signe avant-coureur ou l'indice; or Ch. Bruneau, à la recherche d'exemples représentatifs, en trouve plus facilement chez des écrivains excessifs qui, loin d'annoncer de nouvelles tendances, précipitent les réactions qui les contrebalancent (d'où trop d'attention donnée à des auteurs comme Rollinat, de Coster ou Le Cardonnell; ajoutez à ceci des préjugés tout subjectifs: Balzac est à peine touché, les Surréalistes énumérés plutôt qu'étudiés, Aragon, Giraudoux laissés de côté, Flaubert porté aux nues).

L'histoire de la langue s'efface devant une collection de monographies sur des styles d'auteurs. M. Bruneau parle bien de *langues d'auteurs* et cherche à y distinguer des styles (par ex., pp. 180, 223, 253). Mais cette dichotomie tient à ce qu'on cherche la différence spécifique, typique, dans l'écart par rapport à la norme. Or cette norme n'est pas montrée. Aussi bien, rien de plus illusoire en stylistique que la notion d'écart: le style comprend aussi les faits de langue communs, puisque l'auteur les a choisis et qu'ils forment le contexte sans quoi ses effets de contraste plus "originaux" ne se produiraient pas (voir mes "Problèmes d'analyse du style littéraire," *Romance Philology*, XIV, 3 [1960-61]). Il s'ensuit que la vraie différence spécifique ne sera pas décrite par des catalogues de procédés et d'anomalies, mais par le tableau d'ensemble d'une structure. Car celle-ci est unique dans la répartition et les rapports mutuels de ses éléments, fussent-ils chacun en soi les plus "normaux."

Faire des listes d'éléments, même avec la puissance d'analyse qu'y apporte l'auteur, n'est que le premier pas. Faute d'en étudier la distribution, Ch. Bruneau ne peut formellement définir ce qui différencie les Décadents des Symbolistes ou la phrase longue de Verlaine de celle de Proust: il est forcé d'avoir recours à des faits de contenu dans le premier cas, à la critique d'intention dans le second. Pour la même raison, la poésie de mots très ordinaires (par ex. Baudelaire, *Chant d'automne*, 4, cité p. 334) demeure inexpliquée, et l'auteur est réduit à l'impressionnisme d'un connaisseur quand il s'agit de définir l'originalité, ou un "style facile" (p. 163) ou un mot "agréable" (pp. 184, 213).

La préoccupation de la norme exprimée en termes de grammaire et aussi l'organisation de l'exposé par auteurs et par mouvements voilent l'importance capitale de faits que M. Bruneau a pourtant relevés: il ne donne pas assez de relief à la révolution qui élargit à l'infini les possibilités de métaphores (p. 54); il note un peu partout les auteurs à vocabulaire extraordinaire et ceux qui mettent des mots banals en relief, mais il n'utilise pas cette opposition pour en faire une classification typologique; il explique pourquoi un barbarisme a pu devenir une élégance (p. 186), sans plus: cette remarque pourtant montre qu'on peut appliquer la notion d'analogie à l'étude des formations stylistiques. Mais



le format de cette publication ne permettait pas d'approfondir. Il n'a pas empêché M. Bruneau de montrer cette connaissance intime de tous les aspects du français, cette sûreté dans le choix des faits, cette acuité du commentaire, cette profonde érudition qui rendent indispensables les livres de l'éminent philologue, quelles que soient les réserves qu'on puisse faire sur des points de méthode. Et si le linguiste est en droit de penser que le titre est trompeur, l'étudiant de la littérature trouvera sous ce même titre une collection d'études stylistiques qu'il chercherait vainement ailleurs. (MICHAEL RIFFATERRE, *Columbia University*)

*Marie de France: Le Lai de Lanval.* Texte critique et édition diplomatique des quatre manuscrits français par Jean Rychner, accompagné du texte du *Lanvals lioð* et sa traduction française avec une introduction et des notes par Paul Aebischer. Genève: Droz, Paris: Minard, 1958. Pp. 127. This excellent publication will be of interest and value to all students of Marie de France and, indeed, to all who are concerned with editing and interpreting Old French texts.

The first part of the book (pp. 1-88) contains a diplomatic text of the four known Old French MSS of *Lanval* and a critical text established by Rychner along with a brief introduction, a discussion of the textual scene, and a bibliographic notice on Marie de France. The second part (pp. 87-125) contains the text of the Old Norse *Lanvals lioð* with a translation into modern French by Aebischer and a detailed study of the Old Norse version.

In making the critical text, Rychner took the trouble once again to try to classify the MSS. After a very painstaking study of the variants, he concluded that the MSS cannot be given a hard and fast classification, but that MSS HP are opposed to CS somewhat more importantly than HC to PS or HS to PC. Hence he breaks with the Hoepffner contention on this point as well as with Warnke's findings. The analysis of the common faults and variants is sober and convincing. And certainly the author's decision not to attach undue importance to the new classification is wise. However, the fact that P (a relatively late MS which contains only *Lanval*, *Gugemar* and a fragment of *Yonec*) so often supports H (the most complete MS) against S (the next most complete one) should give the HP group a little more authority—especially since N has a penchant for HP (p. 102). In fact, one might have expected at least a brief description of the four MSS in a book of this nature even though they have all been duly described elsewhere. In the interest of brevity, no doubt, the author merely refers the reader to the places in which the MSS have been described and the MS tradition discussed.

Although Rychner declares that he is not expecting to get back to the original text, he does not give up the hope of getting closer to the original than any of the existing texts. He adopts the spelling of Warnke (and H) against Hoepffner, Mussafia, and others; consequently the text is not so readable as one based on the MS S. It should be noted, however that he was not aiming at readability but at clarity and precision—an objective that he undoubtedly achieves.

Rychner's subtle analysis of the art of composition in the Middle Ages

(*La Chanson de Geste: Essai sur l'art épique des jongleurs*. Genève: Droz; Paris: Giard, 1955) is called into play in an illuminating discussion of the punctuation (pp. 19-21). Indeed, admirers of Rychner's earlier work, of whom I am one, would no doubt have liked to have a much fuller discussion of Marie's art of composition. This kind of study can still contribute much to our appreciation and even to our understanding of Old French texts.

Aebischer's text of the Old Norse *Lanvals lioð* follows that of Keyser and Unger except for minor changes. What is new here is a word-for-word translation of the Old Norse version which makes it possible for all to see how very different it is from that of the Old French MSS. Although it was made well before any of the extant Old French MSS, it is obviously full of omissions and interpolations that weaken any value it might have for getting back to the original text. Rychner and Aebischer are of course perfectly aware of this. In fact, one of the main reasons for including the Old Norse text was to show that earlier evaluations are not acceptable. This alone would justify its inclusion; but merely seeing how the Old Norse translator erred, omitted, paraphrased, or elaborated upon Marie's text shows how at least one medieval reader reacted to the poem and brings us ever so slightly closer to an understanding of its impact upon the contemporary audience.

One of the many vexed questions confronting students of Marie de France is the chronology of her three known works. The present editors reiterate the generally (but not universally) accepted order: *Lais*, *Fables*, *Espurgatoire*; but unlike some of their predecessors, they state clearly that the only sure fact on this point is that the *Espurgatoire* was written after 1189. That being the case, and as there is no firm evidence that Marie wrote the *Fables* (a fairly pedestrian translation) after the *Lais*, which were highly original and occasionally brilliant, I see no reason for us to follow the traditionally accepted chronology. It is true that the *Espurgatoire* is even more pedestrian than the *Fables*, and it is practically certain that both *Lais* and *Fables* were written before the *Espurgatoire*; but until documentary proof of the traditional order is found, it seems to me not unreasonable to assume that if Marie had written the *Lais*, for which she was famous in her lifetime, before the *Fables*, she would have announced this fact in the Epilogue to the *Fables* when she identified herself and expressed the fear that others might claim credit for her work:

Puet cel estre, cil clerc plusur  
 prendreient sur els mun labur:  
 ne vueil que nuls sur lui le die;  
 cil uevre mal ki sei ublie. (Warnke, p. 327)

This valuable contribution is the end product of a seminar at Neuchâtel in 1956-57 in the course of which the MSS of *Lanval* were studied very closely. It is to be hoped that a similar study of the other *lais* of Marie de France will be undertaken—especially *Gugemar*, which, like *Lanval*, has survived in the MS P. Such a study might well throw additional light on the question of the relation between the MSS and could surely add to our understanding of the art of the poet. (JULIAN HARRIS, *University of Wisconsin*)

*La Politique de La Fontaine*. Par Georges Couton. (Bibliothèque de la Faculté des Lettres de Lyon, fascicule II). Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres," 1959. Pp. 152. Professor Couton's latest study might easily lead to a reopening of the debate as to whether artistic creations should justifiably be probed for implied biographical or social-political information. It can at least be said, no doubt paradoxically, that the otherwise elusive La Fontaine lends himself a little better than some of his contemporaries to an investigation of that sort: overt references in his writings occasionally offer ready material for the literary biographer. This, however, constitutes but a marginal reduction in a vast speculative area; and almost necessarily so. For if the classicism of La Fontaine's inimitable sketches lies largely in their timelessness and their universality, it is also the reason why the masterpieces of that period present such a formidable challenge to those who would penetrate their objective surface. To justify the attempt in the first place, and then to tackle the problem without stumbling into arbitrariness is no small undertaking; it takes a scholar of Professor Couton's competence to write learnedly and plausibly about a topic such as *La Politique de La Fontaine*.

The title's elasticity is convenient to the author. Much as had already been done by Taine and others, the first two chapters, "Les Hommes et la vie sociale" and "Problèmes de gouvernement," trace in the main such a *Lebensanschauung* as the *Fables* seem to reflect. The poet's usually cryptic reactions are translated in the course of a well-reasoned exosmotic process into such recognizable features as balanced pessimism, unromantic sensitivity, moderate anti-social leanings—aspects explored further in chapter V, "Composantes d'une attitude politique." Chapter III therefore confronts the reader with a semantic shift when it sets out, under the heading "Les Fables, chronique de politique contemporaine," to correlate certain poems and specific affairs of state at home and abroad. With the emphasis transferred from the fabulist's philosophy to the historical context, the *politique* under scrutiny is no longer so much La Fontaine's as that of Louis XIV.

Conceding that unequivocal references to domestic events are few—but feeling somehow that the eye of La Rochefoucauld or Madame de la Sablière would have picked up many a political allusion that escapes us today (p. 72)—the author points nevertheless to *La Belette entrée dans un grenier* (possibly inspired by the restitution proceedings against tax farmers), *Le Berger et la mer* (the financial stay-at-home conservatism of which is viewed as discreet opposition to Colbert's colonial expansion program), *Les Devineresses* and *L'Horscope* (wherein La Fontaine is seen deriding public credulity at the time of the notorious poisoning trials, when rumors about witchcraft were rampant). All of this may be perfectly true; the trouble is, of course, that we can never be quite sure. And this doubt keeps plaguing us in case after case examined under this inferential method. *L'Ecrevisse et sa fille*, first appearing in 1693, praises the wisdom of timely retreats, "surtout au métier de Bellone"; Professor Couton is inclined to put the date of composition in the autumn of 1689, at a time when the French king had to withdraw before his enemies of the League of Augsburg (p. 81). Here again, he may be right; but chronology, heavily relied on in such circumstantial theses, is a slippery pedestal

on which to erect evidence. If statistics, as the saying goes, can be made to prove almost anything, chronology may well possess similar adaptability.

This is not to say that all conjecture is fruitless. Where, as in the case of Professor Couton's book, erudition and tempered judgment lead to skilfully contrived and defended hypotheses, scholarship is bound to benefit. Whether or not the reader will ultimately adopt the author's conclusions, he is likely to find *La Politique de La Fontaine* stimulating as well as informative. (FELIX R. FREUDMANN, Skidmore College)

*Racine and Poetic Tragedy*. By Eugène Vinaver. Translated from the French by P. Mansell Jones. New York: Hill and Wang, 1959. Pp. vii + 143. Though the original dates from 1951 (*Racine et la poésie tragique*. Paris: Nizet) and this translation from an English edition of 1955 (University of Manchester Press), this study epitomizes the tendency in Racine criticism since the War to concentrate primarily on the text (at least in critical circles outside of France—Professor Vinaver is Professor of French Language and Literature in the University of Manchester). The study also pushes to its extreme a tendency in much of this criticism to locate *le tragique racinien* exclusively in the poetry, understood here as the verbal or textural as distinguished from the dramatic or structural. The author unashamedly stresses differences in theory and practice between Corneille and Racine which more recent studies have muted. With unconcealed partiality he contends that only Racine has written tragedies, for only he in his century was not concerned simply to write well-made plays.

Not that Racine's plays are ill-made. However, the plot is at best only a scaffolding for the poetry. Ironically, Professor Vinaver, who stresses the beauty of Racine's verse, thus reiterates ornamentalist notions of the relation between "the story" and "the poetry." That this time the "story" is the subsidiary element does not obscure the fact that a key esthetic element has been minimized. Ornamentalism also shows up in Professor Vinaver's practice of isolating "truly poetic" lines whose incantatory effect transports the auditor, seducing him to a recognition of the tragic rather than convincing him of its existence. The author's analysis of various prosodic devices is often perceptive (though probably puzzling in many cases to English-speaking readers who only *read* French), but his stress on the purely musical effects of Racine's verse is dubious. In Phèdre's confession is the incantation resulting from "auditive images" (rather than onomatopoeia) really so free from the "material framework of speech" (or, to return to the original for an accurate expression of Professor Vinaver's thought: "du discours matériel")? Does it or does it not make a difference whether we follow "bright nasal vowels (an)" and "bright pure ones (ò)" down to final "resonant r's" (p. 70 in words different from those Racine has written? Can we follow Racine's "J'ai voulu, devant vous exposant mes remords" (*Phèdre*, V.vii) with, say, "Par un venin plus lent m'étendre chez les forts" and obtain the same poetic effects? I am aware that I have neglected consonant harmony in this change, but Professor Vinaver himself concentrates almost exclusively on vowel harmony in his discussion. Moreover, as Hugo's famous homonymic couplet

proves, even an exact correlation of every sound would only point up the risks of locating the "expressive function" of Racine's verse in its music. Poetry is a rare thing, to be sure—that is, an infrequent and a precious thing. Even in Racine, according to Professor Vinaver, where it is sustained in a single play only a few times: in *Andromaque*, *Bérénice* and *Phèdre*. The rest of the time Racine writes dramas, although he does so in what might be described as two cycles of evolutionary de-dramatization: *La Thébaine* to *Bérénice* (the cycle of "The Poetry of Sacrifice") and *Bajazet* to *Phèdre* (the cycle of "Tragic Error"). In the first cycle more and more of the principals are "pre-tragic" (a term I use to summarize Professor Vinaver's discussion of those characters aware from the outset of their tragic destiny as opposed to those who *become* aware of it). The author acknowledges that *Andromaque* is only a step toward the pure example of the pre-tragic *Bérénice*, but, like Thibaudet, he stresses "les larmes d'Andromaque" to an extent bringing the play closer to the dramaturgy of *Bérénice* than other aspects of its own dramaturgy warrant. Does *Andromaque* ever really "resign" herself to the "profound meaning of her misfortune" (p. 92)? She speaks of her "sacrifice," it is true ("... j'ai moi-même en un jour / Sacrifié mon sang, ma haine et mon amour") on the last occasion in which we see her directly (IV.i), but this concludes a speech enjoining Céphise to raise Astyanax as a hero and so make her sacrifice worthwhile. Sacrifice is thus a means to an end, not the sign of frustration or limitation. It is, in short, a sacrifice in the religious sense of the word, making something possible rather than impossible for the "sacrificer." Again, in this final vision of her on stage, *Andromaque* is no longer crying. She is calculating ("Je sais quel est Pyrrhus"); self-sufficient ("Mais aussitôt ma main. . . sauvant ma vertu"); regal ("Non, non, je te défends, Céphise"); shrewd ("C'est Hermione. Allons, fuyons sa violence"). As for the final vision of her evoked for us by Pylade, resignation and a sense of the impossible are the last categories applicable:

Aux ordres d'Andromaque ici tout est soumis.  
Ils la traitent en reine, et nous comme ennemis.  
Andromaque elle-même, à Pyrrhus si rebelle  
Lui rend tous les devoirs d'une veuve fidèle,  
Commande qu'on le venge, et peut-être sur nous  
Veut venger Troie et son premier époux. (V.v)

The tragedy in *Andromaque* is not in the destiny of this triumphant queen, but in that of the "secondary" characters, notably Hermione and Oreste. And, as Professor Vinaver himself acknowledges, Hermione's tragic perception comes at the end of the action, not before the action.

In fact, Professor Vinaver's best pages are those dealing with the heroes whom his theory of Racinian tragedy should lead him to consider the least Racinian: those in whom "to affirm itself . . . tragic necessity does not wait until, to the determination of fatality, there should be added their own self-determination and their impulse of clear assent" (p. 115). That is, for these characters (Hermione, Thésée and Phèdre are cited) perception comes after the fact, after the clash of purpose and passion. These are dramatic characters, viewed by Professor Vinaver (p. 115) as the opposite of the

pre-tragic characters of the first cycle of plays. But then he ambiguously links the characters from each cycle in a way which, surprisingly enough, makes all characters not pre-tragic, as one might expect from his theory, but dramatic: "It is only in the *final* stage of their existence, at the moment when rays of odious light spread around them, that the one type and the other perceive *through events* the revelation of implacable nature and the tragic identity of all beings" (p. 115, italics mine). Is *Bérénice*, then, dramatic? Or if it is not and it is "the truest 'tragedy' of all those which Racine wrote" (p. 39), what is "Racinian" about the rest of the canon, especially *Phèdre*, the play for which he is most honored? In fact, what is "tragic" about *Phèdre*, then? Using Professor Vinaver's statistics (eight "dramas" and one "poetic tragedy") is it not more likely that the greatest of the "dramas" would be the most "Racinian?"

There are two ways out of these complexities. One is implicit in my reservations about Professor Vinaver's exclusive linking of poetry and tragedy. It is to remember that we are dealing with a fictional structure. Events have a pattern which *realizes* the tragic. This is not to reverse Professor Vinaver by claiming that only in change can we have tragedy. Rather, it suggests that there are two kinds of dramaturgy: a deductive and an inductive. Professor Vinaver himself begins with such a premise, denies that the second type is "Racinian," and then brilliantly shows it at work in the second cycle of plays—but relectantly, because the theory of a Racinian essence or system keeps getting in the way. Thus he does not sufficiently distinguish between his complete foreknowledge of the tragic shape of events and a given character's *growing* knowledge. Nor does he take sufficient account of the contradiction between texture and structure in such plays as *Andromaque* and *Iphigénie*. Finally, the unworkability of the theory leads him to obfuscate the good practical criticism of both cycles with summary formulations like that noted in my preceding paragraph.

The other way out of these complexities is to remember that Racine has written individual plays each of which must be treated not as "Racinian tragedy" but as *a* tragedy or *a* non-tragedy "selon les lois constitutives de l'univers de la pièce" (M. Goldmann's principle need not lead us to his estimate of individual plays). The pursuit of essences or systems, like the study of sources, lends itself to the neglect of individual works of art.

*Racine and Poetic Tragedy* is a serious book, one of the most worthwhile of recent studies of Racine. The translation is as elegant as the original, but not always so precise, and occasionally misleading (as in "discours matériel" cited above and in "appui" rendered as "substance" [p. 41]). To disagree however slightly with the translation and however gravely with the book itself in no way diminishes my readiness to recommend it to the readers of this journal. (ROBERT J. NELSON, *University of Pennsylvania*)

*Les Grands Rôles du théâtre de Jean Racine*. Par Maurice Descotes. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1957. Pp. xv + 208. In his earlier works Professor Descotes had already shown his interest in actors and their art. This has led to the unusual approach, in the present volume, to the theater



of Racine. His aim is to study the main dramatic roles in Racinian tragedy (from *Andromaque* to *Athalie*) and the way these roles have been acted on the French stage, from the seventeenth century down to the twentieth. In taking up each play Descotes first analyzes the text itself, to show the possibilities and problems of dramatic interpretation, then gives a historical account of the manner in which famous actors have played the leading parts. Such a subject has an inherent difficulty: the virtual non-existence of journalism and dramatic criticism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Hence an inevitable uneven quality in Descotes' book. He can tell us very little about the performances by "la du Parc," "la Champmeslé" and the other actors of Racine's time, but he provides perhaps a plethora of information on the acting of Sarah Bernhardt.

He could have avoided this fault, to some degree, by extending his documentation. His bibliography is lengthy but it lists only works written in French. Yet British, German, and American scholars have all made significant contributions in the field of French theatrical history. The most unfortunate omission is that of H. C. Lancaster. Descotes has apparently never consulted the *History of French Dramatic Literature in the Seventeenth Century*, which brings to light so many small facts on the staging of classical plays. Nor does he know Lancaster's two-volume history of the Comédie Française (1680-1774), which is possibly an even more important source of information on actors and stage techniques.

With these defects noted, it must be said that Descotes' study is a welcome one, solid and scholarly within certain limits, and very enjoyable to read. His discussions of plot and characterization in Racine's tragedies, all done from the actor's point of view, contain many illuminating remarks and will help the reader of these texts to visualize the plays as theatrical performances. Teachers can profit greatly from this material when faced with the challenging task of explaining and "selling" French classical tragedy to undergraduate students. But the main value of the book is that it shows how characters in these plays, indeed the whole orientation of plot and themes, can be transformed in accordance with the interpretation given by individual actors.

In the case of *Andromaque*, for example, the portrayal of the heroine has sometimes been compared to a weeping willow tree. Her age has varied from about twenty to almost forty, depending on whether she is personified primarily as a young mother or a dignified queen and widow. Some actresses, notably Sarah Bernhardt, have enlivened the role by having *Andromaque* flirt quite brazenly with Pyrrhus, although there is little justification for this in Racine's text. The part of Bérénice was always feared by actresses as being too quiet and even monotonous; Rachel and others attempted it half-heartedly and with little success. Then in the eighteen-nineties Julia Bartet reinterpreted the role thoughtfully and persuasively, achieving an outstanding triumph which lasted for some eighty performances. For any lover of the Comédie Française, Descotes will bring back memories of famous Racinian actors of the last century, such as Lekain, Talma, Mounet-Sully, De Max, Marie Dorval, and Marie Bell.

The book has one final point of interest: it sometimes accounts for the

vicissitudes of taste which have affected the fortunes of Racine's plays. *Mithridate* was extremely popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries then began to fall into disfavor. Modern audiences consider it a tragedy which is too political in tone, too military, or as Faguet put it, too "louis-quatorziennne." We are inclined to prefer such dramas as *Britannicus* and *Phèdre*, with their emphasis on fiery emotional problems.

The last chapter of the book, a disappointing one, bears the title "La Diction du vers de Racine." The trouble here, once again, comes from the absence of seventeenth-century commentaries on the art of declamation as practiced by contemporary actors. We know very little about the diction of "la Champmeslé"—merely that Racine coached her and admired her voice—and even less about the poet's intentions or aspirations in the realm of dramatic eloquence. For lack of evidence, Descotes can offer only vague suppositions concerning the musicianship of Racine's leading actors; then he hurries on to the nineteenth century where documentation becomes more plentiful. In this connection, the author should be congratulated on the *discographie* at the end of his book which lists fifteen recordings, most of them still on the market, of Racine's tragedies as interpreted by actors of the Comédie Française and other troupes. For students of versification and diction here is some source material which could prove immensely valuable. (PHILIP A. WADSWORTH, *University of Illinois*)

Robert Chasles: *Les Illustres Françaises*. Edition critique publiée avec des documents inédits par Frédéric Deloffre. (Bibliothèque de la Faculté des Lettres de Lyon, fascicule III) Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres." 2 v. Pp. lxx + 613. There have been previous attempts (by Champfleurs in 1857 and by von Waldberg in 1906) to "discover" Robert Chasles (1659-1721?), author not only of the *Illustres Françaises* (1713) but of an important *Journal de voyage aux Indes* (1721) and of *Mémoires*, published in 1931. Obviously, Champfleury's and Waldberg's efforts met with little success, for even so well informed a scholar as M. Antoine Adam fails to mention Chasles in his *Histoire de la littérature française au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, which extends to 1715. It is to be hoped that M. Deloffre's remarkable critical edition will at last establish Robert Chasles as a major novelist—as the outstanding creative writer of his generation. The *Illustres Françaises*, which can stand comparison with such masterpieces as *Manon Lescaut*, *La Vie de Marianne*, and even *La Princesse de Clèves*, was a best seller in its day: it went through some twenty editions and was translated into English and German. Moreover it gave rise to the first *drame bourgeois*: *Silvie*, as well as to a comedy by the talented Collé. It seems likely that Chasles, as a novelist, influenced Prévost, Marivaux and Richardson.<sup>1</sup>

M. Deloffre has assembled all the known facts concerning the author's adventurous life and included in his edition a valuable critical bibliography.

1. For the influence on Prévost and Richardson, see Roddier's important article in *RLC*, jan.-mars 1947, pp. 3-38; for the influence on Marivaux, Deloffre's introduction to the Garnier edition of *La Vie de Marianne*, pp. xxi to xxviii.

More important still, his analysis of the novel itself, from the standpoint of style, plot, and characterisation, does full justice to the creative powers and technical ability of Chasles. This introduction should, however, be supplemented by Deloffre's recent article: "Un mode préndthalien d'expression de la sensibilité à la fin du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle," in *CAIEF*, no. 11, May 1959.

Actually, the *Illustres Françaises* is by no means a single novel, but a grouping of seven "récits" with recurring characters and a dominant theme. As a work of fiction, it does not appear to fit into any of the usual categories. Although Chasles had visited many strange lands, there is not a trace of exoticism in any of the stories; although he took considerable interest in politics, particularly foreign affairs, his tales have nothing in common with the fictitious court memoirs so fashionable at the time; although he led a remarkably adventurous life and was apparently a sort of *déclassé*, his novel has practically nothing of the picaresque. In some respects, the *Illustres Françaises* could be regarded as a realistic novel. Its realism is quite different from that of *L'Histoire comique de Francion*, *Le Roman comique* or *Le Roman bourgeois*, for even minor characters, such as peasants, never become caricatures, and even the most insignificant events never become trivial. Chasles invariably presents his characters *en situation*, repeatedly stressing their social and financial status. And he never fails to give detailed descriptions of their physical appearance as well as the various aspects of their temperament. More important still, the author is interested in exploring unconscious, irrational motivation. According to M. Deloffre, Chasles has substituted a "psychologie individuelle," based essentially on temperament, milieu, and background, for the "vérité morale" of a La Bruyère. To express this new psychology, the author consistently makes use of a conversational style, as natural as it is flexible, which has little in common with the ornate rhetoric or the preciosity of many of his predecessors. His realism tends, however, to be visionary, particularly in the highly dramatic "Histoire de Des Frans et de Silvie," which has many of the qualities but few of the faults of a "roman noir."

M. Deloffre has compared the world of the *Illustres Françaises* to that of Stendhal—the world of the "happy few." And it is true that many of his adventurous characters "ressemblent plutôt aux personnages que les héros de Stendhal se proposent pour modèles qu'à ces héros eux-mêmes."<sup>2</sup> In other words, Chasles appears to have anticipated the Stendhalian ideal which, for Beyle himself, even in his novels, remained completely inaccessible. Chasles' heroes, like those of Corneille, are conscious of belonging to an elite. The pursuit of happiness in the guise of irresistible passion and perilous adventure is the only type of endeavor worthy of their attention. Characteristically, each time that one of the protagonists is about to tell the story of his life, the servants are ordered to leave, for daring deeds and, especially, unorthodox ideas are not meant for the ears of the *canaille*.

As M. Deloffre is careful to point out, Chasles multiplies realistic details, not only to make his narrative more convincing, but also to produce strange, poetic effects. The author is obsessed by time and place. In several of the

2. *CAIEF*, no. 11, p. 20.

stories, there appears to be an ironic comparison between human time and a preordained destiny, which is frequently manifested through seemingly far-fetched coincidences. Thus Chasles who, like his contemporary Boulainvilliers, was a strong believer in astrology, heightens the dramatic values of even commonplace incidents, each of which can appear as a moment of truth where human volition is confronted with fate. In this respect, the most impressive chapter is the one concerning the love of Des Prez for Mademoiselle de L'Epine, characterized throughout by split-second timing. It is a sort of *jeu de l'amour et du hasard* where an absurd and pitiless fate runs off with the stakes in spite of all the precautions of the protagonists. Punctuality, legal contracts, money, games of chance, which stress, in one way or another, the importance of security in human relations, are, in the final analysis, of no avail, for destiny is time's master. It is worth noting that Des Prez' first present to Madeleine de L'Epine was "une fort belle montre sonnante."

To the preoccupation with place and time is added, in the "Histoire de Monsieur des Frans et de Silvie," the obsession of knowledge. This tale of supernatural harks back more than any other to the classical tradition—to the Racinian analysis of passion in conjunction with fate. As in classical tragedy, we find an abundance of intellectual terms which reveal in varying ways the inability of human intelligence to cope with mystery. Chasles recounts the strange love of Des Frans for Silvie, a foundling born under mysterious circumstances. She becomes the victim of a diabolic charm which assures the triumph of the occult powers surrounding her existence.

According to M. Deloffre, Chasles is an original and daring moralist. Unlike Montesquieu and Voltaire, he does not use the narrative as a convenient vehicle for expressing "unpopular" ideas. To be sure, his originality as a moralist must be based on a few paragraphs in the last and longest of the "récits": "L'Histoire de Monsieur Dupuis et de Madame de Londé." To Chasles, the widow's frankness must have seemed more important than her unorthodox views concerning love and marriage, which shocked contemporary readers. This frankness is quite in keeping with the general tone of the story and with the amazing brutality of Dupuis' behavior, particularly towards women. Indeed, in this final episode, Chasles does everything possible to shock his readers. He consistently maintains a "ton rosse" which is ever so much more genuine than that found in many modern novels. And compared with the tough Monsieur Dupuis, most modern heroes are merely maladjusted weaklings: it is as if Molière's Don Juan had forgotten all the *bienséances*.

One of Chasles' chief claims to glory is the creation of a new esthetic of womanhood: all of his "illustres Françaises" heroically pursue what they consider to be happiness: "y a-t-il au monde pour une femme d'autres plaisirs que ceux de l'amour?" (p. 479). And some of them remain virtuous even by conventional standards. Their love is based, to same extent, on esteem—on a shrewd appraisal of the lover's strength of character and of his utter dedication to the pursuit, through thick and thin, of happiness. This happiness is closely connected with danger, as it is in the novels of Stendhal; and to attain it the lovers must invariably flout the conventions of both

society and the Church. Chasles' energetic women are as individualized in their physical appearance as in their behavior. No two characters in the book are really alike, and none of them conforms to the classical ideal of beauty found, for instance, in the *Princesse de Clèves*. That the author advocates a sense of beauty quite different from that of the seventeenth century is apparent in the description of Mademoiselle de Bernay, saved from becoming a nun at the very moment when she was to pronounce her final vows (p. 168). And such is the beauty of the *Illustres Françaises*, a novel which has all the animation and the studied carelessness of a drawing by Gillot. To become a great name in literature, Robert Chasles, *écrivain du roi*, needs only one thing: readers, and many of them. (JUDD D. HUBERT, *University of California, Los Angeles*)

*Diderot et Falconet: Correspondance: Les six premières lettres*. Ed. Herbert Dieckmann et Jean Seznec. (*Analecta Romanica*, Beihefte zu den *Romanischen Forschungen*, Heft 7). Frankfurt-am-Main: Klostermann, 1959. Pp. 73. Professor Dieckmann's interest in the Diderot-Falconet correspondence is long standing, as is shown by his frequent references to it in his "Zur Interpretation Diderots" (1939).<sup>1</sup> More recently, this early interest of his has been sustained by his discovery of the Fonds Vandeul and by his utilization of the Falconet collection of the correspondence which, when Professor Dieckmann first used it, was at Nancy but is now available at the Bibliothèque Nationale (see, for example, his remarks in his *Inventaire du Fonds Vandeul* regarding the one and his article in *French Studies* concerning the other.)<sup>2</sup> Professor Seznec, too, has amply demonstrated his interest in and understanding of the Diderot-Falconet exchange, whether in the article that he wrote with Professor Dieckmann on "The Horse of Marcus Aurelius," in his *Essais sur Diderot et l'Antiquité* (1957), or in his article on "Falconet, Voltaire et Diderot."<sup>3</sup> Most immediately of all, Professors Dieckmann and Seznec dealt with the subject in a seminar at Harvard in the autumn of 1958, following Professor Dieckmann's public announcement in Paris in April 1957 that his editing of the correspondence was in progress. (That seminar must have seemed to the students participating in it very remarkable indeed, a scholarly antiphony, with Professor Seznec at one end of the table and Professor Dieckmann at the other, and attention swiveling back and forth as if the spectators were at a championship tennis match.) The *Beiheft* here being reviewed is an outcome of that seminar.

The principal intention of the Dieckmann-Seznec study is to provide the learned world—and this for the first time—with a complete text of the first six letters of the correspondence, thus throwing new light on the celebrated

1. *Romanische Forschungen*, LIII (1939), 47–82.

2. Herbert Dieckmann, *Inventaire du Fonds Vandeul et inédits de Diderot* (Genève, 1951), pp. 101–04; "Diderot's Letters to Falconet: Critical Observations on the Text," *French Studies*, V (1951), pp. 307–25. See also his "An Unpublished Notice of Diderot on Falconet," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XV (1952), 257–58.

3. Jean Seznec and Herbert Dieckmann, "The Horse of Marcus Aurelius," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XV (1952), 198–228; Jean Seznec, "Falconet, Voltaire et Diderot," *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, II (1956), 43–59.

dispute regarding posterity and immortality. The three written by Diderot have been previously printed, but never so amply, with the consequence that we have never had anything so close to the original text; and the three Falconet replies are here published for the first time. These first six letters are essential for helping us to understand the genesis and the intellectual bearings of the debate.

With the rigor and meticulousness in the analysis and comparison of texts that we have come to expect from them, Professors Seznec and Dieckmann present as the basic documents of their edition the text as it is in the Fonds Vandeul, with variants recorded as they appear in the two texts of the manuscript volume formerly at Nancy. The variants are numerous, especially those made by Falconet. "Falconet travaillait son texte comme il travaillait ses œuvres de sculpture, incessamment, obstinément, dominé par la volonté de l'expression vraie et totale, tourmenté par la crainte de mal dire ou de dire des banalités" (p. 20). Even so, the textual problems posed by the three Falconet letters are much less difficult than those presented by the ones of Diderot, for we have the autograph originals in the case of the former, but only copies—and which, then, were the earliest?—in the case of the latter. Professors Dieckmann and Seznec discuss all the manuscripts, including the one at Leningrad, as well as all the printed versions. The careful collation and stylistic knowledge requisite for this sort of grinding labor puts all of us in debt to the scholars who, over and above being willing to do it, are able to accomplish it consummately well. What is new and very valuable in this edition are the extensive addenda, written by Diderot indubitably (though it is not known just when, nor precisely at what points he intended them to be intercalated into his letters), which Vandeul, Diderot's son-in-law, incorporated into the first three letters. These additions are significant, interesting—and *inédites*. Regarding them, Professors Dieckmann's and Seznec's policy has been to "restituer autant que possible la forme originale des lettres et traiter les additions comme des accroissements qui se sont ajoutés au texte sans en faire partie intégrante" (p. 37). Photographs from two pages of the manuscripts illustrate the editors' problems and allow the reader to study their methods.

The first pages of the editors' introduction are devoted to a masterly essay on the debate regarding posterity, showing how Diderot enlarged the discussion and tried to make it more objective. In doing so, "Le respect pour la postérité est lié au sentiment de piété pour la culture classique. . . . L'antiquité et la postérité ne sont que deux aspects de la même idée: celle de la tradition. Ce sont pour Diderot des termes corrélatifs; le principe fondamental est la continuité" (p. 14). As Professor Dieckmann has remarked elsewhere, "the letters to Falconet are among Diderot's most important works."<sup>4</sup> This edition helps memorably in the understanding of the early stages of that great debate. (ARTHUR M. WILSON, *Dartmouth College*)

*Sainte-Beuve: Correspondance générale.* Recueillie, classée et annotée par Jean Bonnerot. Tome huitième. 1849-1851. Nouvelle série, Tome II. Paris:

4. *French Studies*, V (1951), 309.



Didier; Toulouse: Privat, 1958. Pp. 404. Sainte-Beuve is still publishing, though not so actively or revealingly of late as another of our contemporaries, Michelet. Thanks to the intermediary which his voice from beyond the tomb finds in Jean Bonnerot, we have the latest volume of his correspondence, the first to deal with that part of his work on which his reputation rests most solidly, the *Lundis*. What a pity (to get my only complaint out of the way immediately) that this volume is marred by so many misprints; if only M. Bonnerot could compose the type and preside, with his usual thoroughness and accuracy, over the finished product!

There are many interesting sidelights in these letters and their accompanying notes. Hortense Allart is once again present in a lively manner, with her occasional confidences, her frank criticism of Sainte-Beuve's criticism, her incisive opinions on Chateaubriand, including her opinion, not shared by Sainte-Beuve, that the *Génie du christianisme* had done more harm to the Christian cause than Voltaire. It is ironic, in view of Sainte-Beuve's later role as a kind of liberal spokesman for the "gauche de l'Empire," to find Louis Veuillot urging him in 1850 to continue defending the "parti de l'ordre." The judgment of the *Lundis* by Champfleury, saluted warmly by Sainte-Beuve as a younger member of the "cavalerie légère" of journalistic criticism, may be instructive, if it serves to remind us that we err to think of Sainte-Beuve as a frustrated "creator" turned sour critic; his limited creative work as poet and novelist flowed more naturally than we realize into his abundantly creative criticism. As Champfleury puts it, "un critique qui n'a pas fait de livres est un eunuque qui médite de l'amour."

But these are among the lesser points of interest in a volume whose chief attraction lies in what it tells us of the spirit in which Sainte-Beuve undertook his first *Lundis* for Dr. Véron's *Constitutionnel* and of the circumstances of their weekly preparation. The light shed on the inner man by these letters is not always very illuminating. There are hints of a connection between his choice of themes in his essays and his desire to live in the past, particularly the immediate literary past, to revive the "fleur" and "parfum" of its great moments, such as the milieu of the *Muse Française*. A striking letter to Eustache Barbe confirms what we have long suspected, that Sainte-Beuve viewed work as a "palliatif," a means of escape from those "tourmens de l'âme qui se dévore elle-même." But such flashes of confessional insight are rare here. One could wish also for more light on the artistic technique this pioneer evolved in developing what he clearly recognized to be a "nouveau genre."

What the letters abound in is testimony to his absorption in his new task with all its difficulties. He has become a "manœuvre" (the word occurs repeatedly), forced to curtail his natural sociability, deprived of "la chose du monde la plus douce, qui est de causer avec ceux qu'on estime." Each article, he tells his friends, should be received by them as a circular letter on which is written "Excusez-moi." And how acute the problems involved in choosing his themes! Again and again he has to turn down requests to treat certain authors, explaining that all his subjects must be "concertés à l'avance entre la direction et moi." Does he always use his vote wisely? Usually his reasons

are convincing, but his failure to write on Barbey d'Aurevilly while agreeing to discuss Jules Janin is suspicious, and his explanation for declining to treat the great Protestant preacher, Adolphe Monod, is curiously narrow-minded, if not shallow ("nous sommes et nous resterons catholiques en France, même quand nous ne serons plus du tout chrétiens").

We can sympathize with him, however, in his handicapped situation of trying to write reflective criticism for a weekly political paper fast becoming a "grande entreprise industrielle." We can appreciate even more his effort, recounted in some detail, to "document" his articles, to solicit information from those close to his subjects, to catch from such persons a "spark" that will give fire to his writing, yet to resist their pressure (especially the pressure of families, those "ennemies de la littérature") to turn him from his goal, which was not "charité morale" but "vérité morale." That Sainte-Beuve was primarily a moralist rather than a literary critic, at least in our contemporary sense, is more than ever apparent from these letters. That he strove for impartiality—even going so far as to say, apropos of his projected article on Henri de Latouche, "je voudrais en parler et être tout simplement juste sur son compte, juste littérairement en laissant dans le demi-jour le caractère," "laissons l'homme"—is also apparent, as surprising as such remarks may seem from a critic who is supposed to have blinded himself to the work by looking too closely at the man's warts and blemishes. His intention in this case was all the more admirable in that "l'homme" was someone he disliked; but, as M. Bonnerot points out, jealousy of Latouche's attentions to Marceline Desbordes-Valmore poisoned the critic's judgment "jusqu'à l'injustice." Sainte-Beuve had as much difficulty practicing impartiality toward some of his subjects as his own critics experience in dealing with him. (RICHARD M. CHADBOURNE, *University of Colorado*)

*Les Dépêches diplomatiques du Comte de Gobineau en Perse. Textes inédits présentés et annotés par Adrienne Doris Hytier. Préface de Jean Hytier. Genève: Droz, 1959. Pp. 267, 4 pl. Gobineau continue à intéresser, comme l'attestent, par leur fréquence, de récentes publications. La présente édition de ses rapports aux Affaires étrangères achève de nous renseigner sur une des périodes les plus fécondes de sa vie intellectuelle. Les cent vingt-deux dépêches que nous donne Adrienne D. Hytier ont été écrites pendant les deux séjours du romancier diplomate en Perse, de 1856 à 1858 et en 1862-63. C'est l'époque où Gobineau découvre enfin, et avec quelle ferveur, l'Orient dont il avait tant rêvé et dont il avait étudié les langues et la pensée dès sa première jeunesse; où il trouve en Asie un refuge spirituel contre le déclin du monde occidental; où il nourrit son imagination de spectacles qu'il évoquera dans *Trois Ans en Asie* et d'où sortiront ses *Nouvelles asiatiques*; où commence l'évolution qui aboutit à la morale des *Pléiades*; l'époque encore où il multiplie travaux philologiques et études d'histoire religieuse, où il compare la philosophie allemande aux philosophies orientales.*

C'est dire l'importance de cette édition. Les dépêches avaient été copiées à Téhéran par le père de l'auteur, mais le secret diplomatique en retarda longtemps la publication, et ce hasard nous vaut maintenant un bel exemple de

continuité intellectuelle—les commentaires de la savante éditrice enrichissant le portrait de cet *Iran de Gobineau* que traçait naguère Jean Hytier. Elle vient confirmer les conclusions d'un ouvrage qui, après vingt ans, reste le fondement de toute étude sur l'exotisme gobinien. Ses notes abondantes accompagnées de solides apparats bibliographiques permettent au lecteur de suivre le fil des événements en dépit de l'orthographe incertaine de noms barbares et de l'obscurité de versions contradictoires: c'est merveille de voir comme l'auteur démêle des généalogies touffues et débrouille l'écheveau des intrigues de cour avec, parfois, plus de perspicacité que Gobineau lui-même. Les deux groupes de dépêches sont précédés d'introductions qui font le point d'une situation où la Perse se trouvait prise entre la poussée anglaise et, comme encore aujourd'hui, l'infiltration russe.

En raison même de leur nature, ces lettres intéressent surtout l'historien; elles jettent un jour nouveau sur des faits qu'on ne voyait guère jusqu'ici que du point de vue des témoins anglais. Mais elles sont moins riches en réactions personnelles, moins utiles à la connaissance de Gobineau écrivain, que d'autres correspondances datant des mêmes années: les lettres de Gobineau à Prokesh-Osten, à sa sœur (éd. A. B. Duff, 1957), à Alexis de Tocqueville (Mlle Hytier se sert de l'édition Schemann; l'édition Mayer-Degros, t. IX des *Œuvres complètes* de Tocqueville, a paru trop tard pour être utilisée; ses annotations n'auraient d'ailleurs imposé aucune modification pour notre période), ou même les trop courts extraits des lettres à sa fille Diane (éd. J. Mistler, *Revue de Paris*, LVII, 10-21). Néanmoins les dépêches ont du point de vue de l'historien littéraire valeur complémentaire: elles sont comme la facette objective de Gobineau. Caractère frappant surtout lorsqu'elles sont écrites le même jour que des lettres intimes où les effusions artistiques de l'écrivain se donnent libre cours et se dépensent entièrement. Mais quand il n'y a pas de ces coïncidences chronologiques, l'écrivain perce aussitôt sous le diplomate. Le style qui était au point mort n'est plus bridé par un formalisme officiel et son mouvement caractéristique, personnel, reparait: on sent sous la précision de l'observateur le plaisir d'un La Rochefoucauld retrouvant dans les motifs des actions humaines la duplicité attendue. Je note des formes de style, comme la litote, certains types de phrase (par ex. les périodes, parfois au discours indirect libre, pp. 76, 136, 211, 250-51 etc.) qui correspondent exactement aux moments où Gobineau s'enflamme, soit qu'il rapporte de retorses intrigues, soit qu'il se plaise à faire valoir son habileté de négociateur. A propos de style, la négligence dont parle Mlle Hytier (p. 161) serait un peu moins sensible s'il ne s'agissait d'un premier jet; dans leur version finale, les dépêches, telles qu'elles figurent au Quai d'Orsay, sont plus soignées, si j'en juge par le texte des dépêches 24 et 27 de 1857 (publiées par A. B. Duff, "En marge d'une Nouvelle Asiatique" *Mercur de France*, déc. 1959, 684-702): sans compter la ponctuation, j'y relève vingt-deux variantes de style; certaines constituent une leçon bien meilleure (ceci d'ailleurs n'ôte rien à la valeur de l'édition: aucune des corrections ne modifie le sens).

Avec beaucoup de finesse, Mlle Hytier analyse l'évolution psychologique de Gobineau: d'abord un optimisme, un enthousiasme pour l'Asie, qui ont ouvert des avenues nouvelles à son génie, un domaine nouveau à la littérature fran-

caise; puis assombrissement, amertume grandissante des dernières années. Légère réserve: ce pessimisme s'efface lorsque Gobineau écrit sur l'Asie; les *Nouvelles asiatiques*, terminées trois ans après le début de la composition des *Pléiades*, sont beaucoup moins amères que ce livre de mépris et de combat. Aussi bien l'auteur souligne-t-elle que chez Gobineau optimisme naturel et pessimisme acquis coexistent: cette vitalité naturelle se change en agressivité au service d'une philosophie sombre.

Enfin Mlle Hytier nous fait mieux comprendre l'art de Gobineau en relevant les passages où le romancier a utilisé ses observations pour des créations proprement littéraires (p. 87, n. 121 sur les sources de *Gambèr-Aly* en dit autant, dans sa sobriété, que l'article d'A.B. Duff cité plus haut, paru presque simultanément. Il faudrait ajouter les opérations mentionnées pp. 163 ss, 245, 261 etc. qui sont certainement à l'origine de la *Guerre des Turcomans*; certains détails du récit de Coulibœuf de Blocqueville, signalé p. 163 n. 3, me feraient croire que Gobineau l'a utilisé pour la couleur locale; et il n'est pas exclus qu'il ait songé à jouer ironiquement sur le thème des *Prisonniers du Caucase* de Xavier de Maistre).<sup>1</sup>

Résumons-nous: la sûreté de l'érudition, la clarté de l'exposé, la sympathie pour un auteur souvent incompris, plus souvent calomnié, font de cet ouvrage une contribution importante à l'étude de l'exotisme littéraire. (MICHAEL RIFFATERRE, *Columbia University*)

*Ernest Renan as an Essayist.* By Richard M. Chadbourne. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1957. Pp. xxii + 264. "Renan deserves a better fate than has befallen him," writes Professor Chadbourne in a passage which reveals the intimate intention of his book. "[...] His work, despite many dead branches that need clearing away, is still very much alive." If "alive" means relevant I am not so sure, even with the help of his lucid and quietly eloquent discussion, that Professor Chadbourne is right. For all our talk about our living, intellectually, on the small change of the nineteenth century, there is one part of the century to which we no longer contract debts, and Renan belongs to it. Current European literature looks back to Nietzsche, Dostoevski, Stendhal, Rimbaud *et alii*, but averts its face from old fashioned positivism; Renan does not count among its ancestors and, having no descendants, has been particularly easy to forget.

Renan's own literary behavior guaranteed such a result. His taste was a half-century behind the time, and he was so out of sympathy with the writing of his contemporaries that he dropped them entirely as soon as it was no longer necessary to please Sainte-Beuve. His poetic sensibility was contemporaneous with Lamartine's (see Professor Peyre's identification of it in *Studies in Honor of Albert Feuillerat*, pp. 211 ff.) His epigoni in criticism—meaning Jules Lemaitre and Anatole France—missed the point of the dominant movements of the end of the century, and the Naturalists and Symbolists were not above returning the hostility. "Telle une vieille

1. La diatribe de Murray sur le mensonge, p. 16, est à rapprocher de *Corr. Prokesch*, pp. 36-37; *Tocqueville*, 252-53. Lire p. 12 n. 15, Raederstoerffer; p. 170, ascensionnel.

vache pourrie," ran the heading of Renan's obituary in the *Mercure de France*. Worse, these same disciples, however much Renan himself may have disliked the mounting dominance of the middlebrow, eventually succeeded in little else than putting a veneer of superficial culture over a high-collar philistinism. Such of his political thought as survived became the pabulum of a political Right whose last refuge was the Vichy of World War II. And meanwhile, Renan's curious disposition toward religion—the mixture of erudite despair, smiling nostalgia for faith, smiling cynicism, all compact with his paradoxical Hegelian optimism ("Courage, courage, Nature!")—has become entirely alien to a generation for which belief and disbelief alike have ceased to be themes to orchestrate. Even the great Renan-haters like Bernanos and Claudel, who kept some of him alive by detesting all of him so much, are now extinct. We now owe Renan what we owe all the others who belong to history-for-history's sake. He is not a *nourriture*.

We owe Professor Chadbourne a real debt for placing emphasis on a "visage" of Renan which has long needed it, meaning the Renan of the middle years. Pommier, Lasserre and various others have adequately explored the period up to and including the break with the Church. Even more attention, first and last, has been paid the figure who emerged, after 1871, as one of the intellectual masters of Europe. We know much less about the sober, industrious, unspectacular scholar-writer of the 'fifties and 'sixties. But, fortunately, these were the great years of the "long article"-essay in the French periodical press and Professor Chadbourne's interest in the essay as a form led him to reread the least remembered part of Renan's work. From this there takes shape the Renan who was at once scholar and popularizer, and whose essays—chronicles of current erudition—transformed the product of Europe's studies and seminars and fed it into the common market of ideas. This aspect of his man manifestly appeals to Professor Chadbourne, whose work at this point becomes a model both of careful scholarship and of persuasion. His insistence upon the point corrects a longstanding bias, and rescues an important part of Renan's work.

On the other hand, Professor Chadbourne's preference for the Renan of the middle years is a moral one: he obviously disapproves of the final incarnation. Most of us, I imagine, would agree to some extent: the "sweet decay" William James talked about has small charm for the contemporary sensibility. Even so, the last phase is immensely interesting for itself. Renan was aware of being a public figure; he took care of which side of his profile he showed the world; he was piqued when critics like Barrès turned on the wrong light. Why, after all, did he finally publish his *Avenir de la Science*? What is the point of the exhibitionism behind the "Prière sur l'Acropole"? Why, if indeed the story is true, did he read of Arnold's books only the pages entered in the index after his own name? Gide, and various others, have made us aware that the creation of a personality can be as much a subject for study as any creation the artist commits to paper. Of its kind, Renan's *persona* may deserve to rank among the minor masterpieces of his century, and one would like to know how much the incidental writings were influential in its creation. Here, it seems to me, Professor Chadbourne's

preference for the younger, more strenuous, less relaxed Renan may have played him a bit false. Certainly a "Dernier Visage de Renan," done with the same care and understanding he lavishes on the less well-known image, would still be welcome.

Meanwhile Professor Chadbourne is under no special obligation to satisfy every caviller who speaks up. Like Trilling's *Arnold*, of which it is in some ways reminiscent, his book is its own defence. What a man like Renan means to another century is always a good subject, renewable with each generation. This particular study has the added merit of being written in an English worthy of its subject. Professor Chadbourne is, himself, a considerable essayist; the discrimination and taste of his style speak almost as eloquently of the value of frequenting Renan as anything that he actually says about him. (W. M. FRODOCK, *Harvard University*)

*Jacques de Lacretelle: An Intellectual Itinerary.* By Douglas Alden. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1958. Pp. 367. This first book-length study of Jacques de Lacretelle is unquestionably definitive: its form, as the examination of both a life and a work, finds its validity in the highly literary quality of the life itself, so that the story is that of a genesis of books when it is not that of experiences later nourishing books. Mr. Alden has given us as much as he properly could of the life of a man still alive, and especially of a life that has been lived as a divorce between public appearance and privacy. He also gives us a tableau of the literary life of the period as Lacretelle experienced it and as he was later to present it; the major forces of the time are enriched by this reflection of them in the mind of a writer in many ways so different from them. But the merit of Mr. Alden's book is that he has not merely supplied a mass of useful fact, or merely made studies of the individual works as self-justifying entities. He has discovered a drama which is characteristic in one way or another of all of these works and which is properly the drama of Lacretelle's life itself. For Mr. Alden this drama is the attempt of Lacretelle to find a "middle way" between the modern and the traditional, or, as Mr. Alden puts it, the "vacillation between the nineteenth-century and the twentieth-century view in art" (p. 321).

Yet the notion of the modern suggested by these pages seems curiously limited by names, defined by what was already done rather than by possibility. There are the radicals, clustered around the name of Cocteau, and there are the stronger influences, more accessible to Lacretelle, of Gide and Proust. These names, recurring over and over, take on the appearance of an almost mythological opposition, a fixed set of alternatives for the novelists of the period to choose between, two mutually exclusive techniques. And the notion of a "technique" in general is a kind of optical illusion visible in moments of the contemplation of already finished works, which fades during the elaboration of the new. The problems associated with these names, in terms of which Mr. Alden seems to conceive the modern, are those of "point of view" in the novel and of psychological analysis.

There is, however, some question as to whether the mere awareness of



these problems constitutes enough of a "concession" to modern art to qualify Lacretelle's work as a real synthesis between the old and the new. The "point of view" was the basis of Gide's reputation as an innovator and there was a moment in literary history when it functioned as a reaction against the omniscient narrator of the nineteenth century. Yet this determination to remain at all costs within a single consciousness, which resulted in the form of the "*récit*," seems to us at present to reflect a historic and now archaic stage of middle class society: a collection of monads in fitful contact with each other, where only such "personal relations" constituted real drama, appropriate material for a work of art. The internal contradiction of the form, which was designed to preserve the truth of the individual consciousness, is that no single *récit* exhausts the world, so that one *récit* implies a multiplicity of other possible *récits*, just as the individual monad implies in its very nature others; thus in the end there is nothing but a great relativity of individuals and what was supposed to have guarded the integrity of the single consciousness reduces it to one dispensable story among many stories. The *récit* is therefore less a modern form than the symptom of a modern problem; and the attempt to transcend this problem by fashioning a large work in which a plurality of *récits* intersect is not a "solution" but merely the dialectical antithesis of the smaller form.

It is moreover apparent that the idea of the "psychological novel" current in this period is dependent on the monadic condition of society: where the individual consciousness is the only reality, its relations with the world will inevitably express themselves in terms of impressions and sensations to be registered and "analyzed." And even the content of these impressions is deeply influenced by the contingency of the *récit*-form. This is how Mr. Alden describes Lacretelle's analytic method: "Instead of going deeper inside himself for further explanations, as Proust might have done, Lacretelle decided to stay on the surface and to become a traditional French psychological novelist who writes with logic rather than instinct" (p. 40). The analyses tend to become embroidery, the filling in of the empty areas of the form, rather than the intrinsically valuable materials with which Proust constructed his work, or even the very careful formulations of Gide, where the "thoughts" are not only designed to be *seen through* as inauthentic but have at the same time their intrinsic reason for being in the real obsessions of the writer himself. Lacretelle's materials are organized to external categories of traditional character analysis: "He appears to have asked himself a series of questions about the behavior of his central character and then to have supplied plausible explanations" (p. 40); "he yields to a natural desire to circumscribe their personalities in a definitive manner" (p. 72).

Thus the "modern" aspects of Lacretelle's work turn out to be a rather involuntary struggle against twentieth-century problems rather than unique opportunities for making something new; and this attitude towards the possibilities of modern life is reflected in what Mr. Alden sees as Lacretelle's central theme: fate, determinism, what Lacretelle calls "physiological fatalism" (p. 87). The feeling of being trapped, of living a closed-off life, can certainly be an authentic way of experiencing a world, as it is in Racine and Flaubert

(to both of whom Mr. Alden compares this preoccupation of his author), but it seems to me that in the mild universe of Lacretelle the determinism functions merely as a right to ignore other human possibilities, as a complacent way to remain the same. The meaning of these images of nobles struggling to preserve or resurrect a dead way of life is apparent; and the occasional interest in various kinds of sexual fatality furnished many of the writers of this period with a handy symbolism for their sense of the historically irrevocable. The respect for the past, either in the form or the content of this work, can be more adequately evaluated in terms of the future it implies. "The writer," says Lacretelle, "who describes in 1920 the functioning of the most modern machines, who makes use of the most recent inventions, will not please anyone a century later, because of the futurist side of his work" (p. 55). This idea of posterity is empty, not a real future which the work itself contributes to forming, but a timeless place of judging to which we are supposed to submit ourselves. It is always a little shocking to find that it is precisely this kind of work, aspiring in a historical age to the timeless, which is punished by the rapidest signs of aging, and which remains dated within the period it had attempted to escape. (FREDRIC JAMESON, *Harvard University*)



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